THE STRUGGLE FOR IMMORTALITY

BY

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CONTENTS.

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THE

STRUGGLE FOR IMMORTALITY.

I.

WHAT IS A FACT?

THIS is a noisy age. The dreamer can find no sacred silence in which to hide his fantasy. The thinker may double-lock his study door, but the winds of heaven will pilfer his thoughts from him through the window, and the birds of the air will carry the matter; if they do not, the world concludes that there was none to carry. The believer, too, is tremulous to the vibrations of the atmosphere. His mysticism and quietism come by the hardest. If he have a faith, he feels that he must believe aloud. On every hand the air is quick with clamors. The "advanced mind" shouts to the scientist. The theologian thunders at the infidel. The ecclesiastic menaces the liberal Christian. The philosopher sneers at each.

Representing none of these wise and urgent people, the writer of this fragment is moved to say a word concerning that considerable portion of humanity who walk outside the circle of this portentous amphitheatre, yet near enough to be alert to its contests as well as deafened by its din. To these honest, quiet, and thoughtful people, who in all militant eras press nearest to the combatants, constituting at once their busiest critics and truest friends, it seems, if I mistake not, as if the main question in dispute were one uncommonly easy to ask and uncommonly hard to answer.

It is a long time ago since our great-grandfathers were crossing lances over the doctrine of imputed sin, or the souls of infants condemned by predestination and foreknowledge absolute to an eternal hell. A damned baby at best was a theory. Nobody ever saw one.

This is not the age of theory; hence we long since took our babies to be blessed by One who thought it worth while to mention the fact that of such was the kingdom of heaven. Thus we care no more whether we are to be punished for the sin of Adam, having enough of our own to look to, to say nothing of the

additional doubt whether Adam himself can be called a fact. This, we find, is the age of fact. No one asks to-day, What is your theory? but, Where is your fact?

So, at least, it seems to these good people of whom I speak, who compose what we call "the masses" of the church and the world. The young man of business, who sits under your preaching from Sunday to Sunday, Reverend sir, watches you with a keen but yet with a slightly saddened eye. Whether this be an age for the encouragement of faith or the preservation of doctrine he is not sure. Whether he has fallen upon an era of inductive or deductive reasoning he does not know; it is probable that he does not care. But, that forces which he does not understand are threatening faiths that he reveres, he does know; and for this, in a downright, manly fashion, he does care very much indeed.

The thoughtful woman at the head of the crowded Bible class which has given such celebrity to your Sunday-school is puzzled, too. She no longer finds Barnes's Notes adequate to the religious difficulties of her observant, critical, restless pupils; she no longer teaches,

either, that the world was made in six days, or that the majority of the human race are doomed by a loving Father to an eternal struggle with a lake of material fire. She has heard the authenticity of the Fourth Gospel and even the original authorship of the Golden Rule called in question. She has a general impression that Darwin is to blame, and that geology is at the bottom of the trouble. She finds this, however, less satisfactory as an argument than might be, when her pet convert, nineteen wise years of age, announces that he will immediately become a free-thinker, on the ground that, next to immorality, there is nothing he so much prays to be delivered from as superstition. Perhaps she learns, as some of us have, to assume in general the uselessness of discussion with the initial moods of "emancipated minds."

So, perhaps, our friend, the young pew-owner, feeling himself unable to hold his ground with the fellows at the club, yet all the fonder of the faith which he cannot defend, as the father is of the child whom he sees surrendering to a stealthy disease, saddens a little more and more, but joins himself to the great

rank and file of the silent believers, who try to be good fellows, and hope the Lord will clear things up some day. He thinks it would be natural to be able to give good reasons for believing anything so important as the Christian religion, — good business reasons, that were clear as the code of ethics on 'change, and as much to be respected, whether to be obeyed or not, — but finds no such reasons causing such respect, and gradually ceases to look for any.

It is safe to say that a part of the difficulties which our friends meet would be relieved, if they could more distinctly, or at least more clearly, define in their own minds some starting-point — without agreement upon which it is impossible to debate differences of either judgment or feeling, and for lack of which so many of our religious discussions are as wasted as the powder and blood of Malvern Hill.

The average religious argument of to-day takes, perhaps, some such form as this, — the disputants, we may suppose, not having reached that stage of familiarity with each other's views at which controversy is tacitly and mutually conceded to be no accretion either to friendship or to faith.

The believer — we use this term and its opposite as, on the whole, less objectionable and more precise than any others which existing religious conflict has popularized — the believer begins by timidly expressing a hope that the unbeliever has "found Christ," or "is a Christian," or "is a man of faith." The unbeliever promptly and not at all timidly expresses his complete dissent from every point of conviction involved in these phrases. He may do this arrogantly or sadly, honestly or shrewdly, earnestly or flippantly, gently or maliciously, but he does it with decision. He speaks of the scientific paradoxes in the "poem of Genesis," of the morals of the Old Testament saints, of the physical impossibility of miracles, of the discoveries of geology, of personal imperfections in the character of Jesus, of the superior nature of Socrates, of the howling dervish, the negro revivals, and the damnation of children, — an article of faith which he asserts is generally wrought into the creeds of Christian churches of the present day, and secretly disavowed by kind-hearted but hypocritical people, who have not the courage openly to combat so monstrous a doctrine.

At this point, the believer strikes in rather warmly, and if he does not reply that such ignorance on any other vital point of contemporary difference would condemn his opponent to the strongest criticism of intelligent people, is tempted to do so, and feels a little out of temper and a little penitent, and suggests that the Bible is an inspired book, written by God for men and through men, and that we must expect to find difficulties in it, and earnestly and pointedly asks, Where will you find, on the whole, a better book for the guidance of human weakness?

The unbeliever replies that there is much fine poetry in the Bible, but more bad argument, Oriental superstition, and confused metaphor; that many men are inspired; that Goethe was a divine man; and that Browning's Paracelsus is as much a work of inspiration as the Song of Solomon, and far more moral. He adds that it is impossible to reconcile God's sovereignty with man's freedom in any such make-shift manner as that adopted by the theologians, and that God either created sin, or he did not; that if he did he was not benevolent, and if he did not he was not

omnipotent; and that we are made to cultivate our manhood, express our individuality, and study the secrets of nature.

The believer suggests that it may be possible we do not, as finite beings, understand all the mysteries in the nature of an infinite God; that it is not to be wondered at if we must leave some points unexplained; that this is perhaps a part of the discipline necessary to fit us for the eternal life.

The unbeliever hastens to say that of the eternal life we know absolutely nothing, — we cannot conceive of either beginning or end; that we are here and know it, but further than this we have no right to infer. We may cherish immortality only as a "solemn hope" (the believer's eyes fill, and he mentally ejaculates, "Poor fellow!"), or we may expect to be as the beasts that perish, and live on in the forces of nature, and the resurrection of the seasons, and the memories of unborn generations, and so on, but that geology is making every hour discoveries which are to revolutionize belief; that hope, faith, love, and the energies of imagination are beautiful fancies, but rocks are facts, and therefore (as nearly as the believer

can understand) he urges that we cling to the rocks.

The believer suggests that rocks are cold comfort; to the bereaved, for instance, or the remorseful.

The unbeliever replies, vaguely, that he is not sure, either, that we comprehend the difference between infinite or finite — Finite? Infinite? He is not certain that there is any infinite, or that he himself, in short, is finite — but that science — And so on, and so on.

Now, all this is firing wild. There is no gold in the target. There shows no target in the mist. If we set our aim in a fog-bank, who is to decide whether we have hit?

The believer may seek to "save" the unbeliever in this fashion till "the eve of the day of the Last Awaking," — he will only irritate. The doubting may try to "reason" with the trusting on this wise, till his tongue returns to the dust that he claims his kin to, — he can only depress. The disputants have swerved from the most elementary of the principles of logic. They have discovered no major premise in common. They must agree upon something before they can disagree intelligently about

anything. There can be no dispute without a basis of harmony. "We may never, perhaps," as Hamilton says, "arrive at truth, but we can always avoid self-contradiction."

Let us now suppose, as it is the object of this paper to suggest, that these two equally earnest people ask of each other, at the outset of all sincere and serious discussion, one simple question: *What is a Fact?*

The believer, we will assume, happens to put the query. The unbeliever hesitates. Neither of the disputants are psychological scholars. Both are intelligently educated. The unbeliever is the more accustomed of the two, probably, to sophistries of discussion. He perceives the importance of the point, and hesitates. It is one of the maxims of civil law that definitions are hazardous. After a thoughtful pause, he replies, with the blunt courage of common sense, which is quite as apt to hit the truth as the sharply refined point of the artist in philosophical language, that he should say a fact was a thing that could be verified.

To this the believer, without hesitation, agrees. All he claims, he adds, is that religion

is a matter of fact as well as science. Grant this, he urges, and we can pursue our discussion. Deny it, and the sooner we agree to disagree the better. The believer's own vision has begun to clarify, with this closer exactness of definition, and his method of expression intensifies.

The unbeliever replies, with animation, that it is impossible to put religion and science upon the same foot-hold. We have, he urges, reached the age of reason — at last. It is no longer practicable for intelligent men to bend their necks to the yoke of superstition. We deal no more with a realm of fancy. Jesus was a rhapsodist. Christianity was full of poetry. It appealed to the imaginative era. We have passed by the birth-time of great poets. Literature acknowledges it. We do not now write epics. We invent the phonograph. Machinery, discovery, action, have replaced reverie, credulity, and dreams. We no longer pray. We telegraph. We have no time to sing psalms. We are engaged in the artificial propagation of fish. Why should we attend church when we can await the spontaneous generation of animalculæ in a bottle of boiled water?

At this point the listener smiles, and the speaker breaks off with some irritation. He sees nothing to smile at. He is very much in earnest. These are serious subjects which he has mentioned. He is indeed more logical than he had seemed, and abruptly turning upon his opponent says, —

You ask me for my facts. I find them in the investigation of nature. Observe them. They alone are worthy of confidence. We seek, we study, we combine, we infer. The human mind was created —

By whom? interrupts the believer.

Consistently, the unbeliever replies that he does not know. The powers of nature, formerly called God, have not yet fully revealed themselves to our ken. I believe nothing that I do not understand. I will not accept what I cannot prove. This is the first duty of the human reason. Man should receive only what he *knows*. I find myself a mysterious being in a mysterious condition. My business is to investigate my condition. Whether there be another world is none of my concern. No eye has seen it, no foot has returned from it, no voice has spoken from it; it is an absolutely

unproved, and therefore unprovable, hypothesis. I find myself in the present world. I have occupation in the study of my limitations. There are mountains, the sea, the stars, the earth. There are geology, astronomy, the nautical sciences, the study of human diseases, the mysteries and *cultus* of the physical organization. I learn from the fossil and the scalpel. The telescope and the microscope, the chart and the battery, command my attention. These give me the undeniable. Exact investigation presents me with my facts. Beyond a fact I am not justified in going.

Where is God? Can you handle him? What is prayer? Go weigh it for me! An immortal soul? My microscope has never revealed it. A fact is a thing revealed or revealable to my senses. Science alone is knowledge. Religion is superstition. Superstition is bondage. I decline to be fettered. Christianity is slavery. I choose freedom. Exact thought is my master.[1] And thus, and thus, and thus.

[1] "He could not accept Christianity," said Renan of Spinoza (I quote from memory), at a celebration in honor of that philosopher's memory. "He could not thus surrender his liberty. *Descartes was his master*"!

As the discussion waxes, the believer is oppressed more and more with the hopelessness, but not the helplessness of his effort. In proportion as he learns the difficulty of dissuading a man from views hardened as they are acquired by the friction of dissent from hereditary faiths, he gains nerve for his own processes of thought, and muscle for his own maturing belief. If nothing more comes out of the conversation, his faith at least is stouter for it. If he has not "converted" the free-thinker, he has himself become a better Christian.

He who believes much has always the advantage over him who believes little or nothing. Faith is the positive, as skepticism is a negation. He who affirms intelligently *and* earnestly carries by a sheer moral propulsion, as irresistible as the channel of Niagara, a power, not unlike the primal awe of nature, over him who denies.

Let us hope that our believer returns upon his antagonist a few ringing words, to which there can be no more convincing reply than the eternal and unassailable finality: I do not agree with you.

You seek, the believer says, the truth, — the

whole and holy and invulnerable truth. I seek no other. You desire a religion of facts. I also wish the same. You demand that we construct belief from reason. I, too, prefer a reason for my conclusions. You claim that you alone possess a basis of fact, since you only restrict yourself to what is known. You claim that you find the known alone in physical manifestations, their formulæ and solutions. I deny your claim.

I deny your claim, because (you will pardon me) of what seems to me its *ignorance*. You forget, or you have never learned, that truth is no niggard, and that science is a broad and bounteous term. It is not alone in the hard bosom of the rock that the Eternal rests. It is not only in the fumes of the laboratory that the breath of the devout seeker exhales. There are trained intellects that are not occupied with the germ theory, or with the latest treatise on the parasites of an unfortunate plant. There are students, as there are scholars, of other than material knowledges. You forget that there are to be found other than the physical sciences. You forget that the history of these other sciences commemorates much of

the highest order of intellect, the most precise training, the most generous culture, the most candid research, and the purest sacrifice of self in the investigation of truth that human life has known.

You forget, in short (or you have never learned), that the MENTAL SCIENCES EXIST. You have not remembered that there is a philosophy of *mind*, as there is of *matter;* that there is a philosophy of *soul*, as there is of *sense*.

One need not be a very learned person to recall the facts that the sciences of ethics, of intellectual philosophy (even of theology, though for the sake of controversial comfort we may waive that irritating illustration), have still respectable positions in the world of thought, quite in rank with mathematics or chemistry. It has slipped your mind, for the moment, that there is a study of *Metaphysics* as well as of *Physics*. You have not articulately understood that a sufficient culture overlooks neither the existence of these two forms of human knowledge, nor their relative importance and adjustment to each other.

And this leads me to say (once more I pray

your courtesy) that I deny your claim because of what seems to me its *arrogance.*

One need not be very learned, I repeat, to understand something of the debt which the students of matter owe to the students of mind. You and I are not learned, only intelligent people, and the intelligent have heard something of Socrates, of Aristotle, of Bacon; of him who (humanly speaking), it might be said, created exact thought, of him who developed it, of him who reconstructed it. Mental science, as we know, was by centuries the elder born, and father of physical science, in any modern signification of the word; as the brain is the creator and guide of the movements of the hand or foot.[1]

To ignore the parental influence of metaphysical upon physical study is a species of filial ingratitude which it is impossible to describe by a smooth adjective. The very processes of thought by which you are trained to investigate the material fact, you owe to ances-

[1] Indeed, the believer might add, we are told by scholars that the father of modern intuitionalism was the father of modern mathematics as well. Descartes was the first of our scientists to study mind in the dissecting-room.

tral centuries of mental discipline and to apostles of mental science. You speak of conscious and sub-conscious cerebration. You deny the mental entity which you once called a human soul. What enables your prompt lip to utter the challenge? Whence comes your power to deny?

I do not express these things in philosophical language, for, as I have reminded you, we are neither of us learned people, but I desire to make you understand in a plain and direct fashion that which I desire to say. Is it becoming, I ask, is it the modesty of wisdom, for the instrument to ignore the influence? Shall the microscope and the retort say to the eye or the hand, "We have no need of thee"? Shall the probe say to the surgeon, "Go to! It is I who tear or torture, as it is I who heal and save"? Speaking of his scientific *confrères*, one of the most distinguished physicians whom this country has known said, "*They cannot account for the 'I.'*"

In short, it seems to me that when a man exalts the science of things which are seen and touched over the science of that which sees and touches; when he prefers to mistake a convo-

lution in the brain for that by which the convolution becomes able to think, feel, and act, — nay, by which alone it is *enabled to make the mistake;* when he selects the less for the greater, the lower for the loftier, matter for mind, brain for soul, he exhibits the presumption of the servant, sent by his master to cash a check of important value, who struts as if the money were his own.

I object to your claim because, once more, I perceive it to be a *degrading* one. It is not necessary to be great ourselves to know that the great natures of the earth have been believing natures. Even you and I can remember that music, poetry, art, philosophy, literature, nay, physics itself, owe something to faith. It is not easy to forget that Beethoven, Mozart, Bach, Händel, Haydn, Milton, Dante, Wordsworth, Raphael and Michael Angelo, Plato and Immanuel Kant and Leibnitz, Goethe and Shakespeare, Kepler and Newton, were believers in the existence of God and the immaterial nature and immortal destiny of the human spirit. It might be comparatively easy to prove that you and I had no souls; to deny one to these people I have

mentioned were to go as far as anything could, perhaps, to prove that you are right, and that we, at least, are destitute of any.

Degrading, I say, — degrading to the deeps below all that is truly fine, all that is delicately observant, all that is highly reverential, all that is nobly receptive, all that is capable of assimilating the ideal, the beautiful, the lofty, and the large in human history, — is that view of human mystery which your claim presents. It may be either the cause or the consequence of this view that you flippantly ignore the testimony of the great teachers of human life. You decline to sit at the feet of the prophets, priests, and kings of the world. You turn your back upon the heights; on art, on inspiration, on intuition, on imagination, on aspiration, on song, on the sources of all that makes men clear and keen in brain, refined and pure in heart. For remember that if you seek to share these things they are no longer properly yours. They are not, they never were, they never can be, the products of a materialistic philosophy. If this is not clear to you, it seems to me that your location quite as well as your attitude puts a

finely and simply outlined truth out of perspective to you. He who climbs, sees. "To him, as to Moses," says a French scholar, "secrets unknown to the rabble are revealed upon the mountain-top."

You sit, then, and adjust yourself to the valley. You burrow, you dig, you descend. Choosing the company of the lowest forms of manifestation, you will find that the influence of their atmosphere is upon you. If a human mind keeps the exclusive society of vegetables and insects and fossils, is it to be wondered at that it fails to see the transfigured cloud which veils, while defining, the motions of the eternal sun? If a man's corroding ambition is to be quoted as an "authority on potato-bugs," he *may* be a sensitive appreciator of Locke's Essay on the Understanding, or the "Excursion" of the Lake Poet, or the Gospel of John; but does it surprise us if he is not?

Pardon once more my plainness if I tell you that I cannot accept your claim, because it seems to me not unlike the scoff of the demonstrator in the dissecting-room. His business leads him to handle flesh. How, then, should God be a spirit?

I have somewhat, too, to affirm. You have called my attention to your facts; I should be glad to acquaint you with mine. Yours, I accept; it is your conclusions which I refuse. I do not question the evolution of the species, or the zymotic theory of diseases, or the existence of the last comet, or the possibilities of the photophone, or the discoveries of psychophysics as affecting the criminal or the insane. Physical science is welcome to do her best or her worst by helpless spectators like yourself or me. A fact is a fact, though it deal with the lowest phases of nature, and truth is holy, whether she hide in a stalactite or an epic, a jelly-fish or an oratorio, a vivisection or a prayer. I accept your facts, retaining the liberty to draw my own conclusions. I only ask that you (retaining, of course, the same liberty) accept my facts before we close or continue this discussion.

Of this, then, I would remind you. The manifestations of mind are at least as much to be respected as the manifestations of matter. He was a real philosopher who gave to his book the title, Man *in his Connection with* the Human Body. What we think and feel

is as genuine as what we see and touch. If I handle a chair or table, my thought of them is as individual as the table or the chair. If I take a pen to write these words, that which creates the words is as real as the pen. "I am the soul of the music," said a musician, when his string snapped. "Though the strings are all broken, the *music is there.*" Let me add (for you will remind me that I do not touch the pulse of your difficulty) that my thought is as real as the brain-cells by whose activity I am empowered to think it.

Thus, if I listen to music which dissuades me from temptation, or lifts me from gloom, or leads me to despair, these emotions exist as much as the ivory of the piano keys, or the catgut of the violin, or the gray matter in the cerebrum which the piano, the violin, and the emotion set in agitation. I am at least as justified in assertion, as you in denial of these facts. Explain them as you will. I offer them as facts. As such — *until you can prove* that "thought is phosphorus and phosphorus is thought," *without the predominant action of your mind in making that hypothesis* — they ought to be by you respected.

There is a form of the mental life which we call spiritual. This is the highest, as it is the finest, phase of the mystery that we name existence. Coleridge expressed what I mean when he said that "faith is itself a higher reason, and corrects the errors of reason as reason corrects the errors of sense." As the physical life is revealed by its phenomena, as the mental life possesses its expression, so the spiritual life has its manifestation. This is a fact. As such it is to be respected.

As we depend upon the senses to make clear to us the presence of the sunrise, as we rely upon the reason to explain to us the nature of a thought, so we lean upon faith to reveal to us the nature of a spirit.

While the eye brings to us the color of the dawn, it can do no more; the optic nerve of an idiot, though it quiver in precise obedience to the laws of his physical organism, for threescore years and ten, will never reveal to him the rapture of the morning. Sense and reason must act together. So the reason, left to itself, informs us of the character of the thought or of the feeling which we have about the sunrise; then it comes, and there it must come,

against its limitation. The intellect of a skeptic, though he cultivate it till he is in his grave, will never produce a prayer for the guidance, or endurance, or delight of the day that is about to be his. Reason and faith must work together. So, we might add, faith, as a disconnected faculty, cannot result in true devotion. Unless guided by reason, the devotee may become a howling dervish, or a hysteric nun. The sense, the mind, and the spirit must live together.

Like the life physical, like the life intellectual, the spiritual life, while yet confessing an interdependence upon these other forms of life, possesses, like them, an individual existence.

"My *soul* to me a kingdom is." In this kingdom there are laws: there is obedience or disobedience; there is anarchy or order; there is the separation of government; there is the history of growth or decline. This is a fact. As such it is to be respected.

A broken physical law involves its penalty. A denied intellectual law implies a punishment. A defied spiritual law presumes its retribution.

Leap into the ocean; no opposing law of salvation interfering, you will drown. Defraud the hours of rest for study or for dissipation; you lose the mental power of controlling natural sleep. Contest against that surrender of the soul to its Creator which we call the religious life; the religious life withdraws itself from you. Unbelief closes over the willing unbeliever like the waves of the sea or the tides of insomnia. These are facts. As such they are to be respected.

Again: the great law of development is the law of action. Every natural power grows by exercise. Any school-boy knows that he can create the iron ball of muscle on his arm only by the use and training of the muscle. Any college girl understands that the various faculties of the brain become serviceable only through action, as they become through inaction inert. As with the brawn, as with the brain, so with the spirit.

To exercise spiritual power is to develop and strengthen it. To disuse it is to repress or extinguish it.

Now, then, I ask you to remember that we who believe, speak to you out of a condition

whose government you have defied or ignored; and that we speak of a faculty whose exercise you have disused. If we mention the spiritual life, we mention that of which you are not a citizen, but an exile; whether by deliberate choice or chance misfortune is not to the immediate purpose, — you are exiled. You have not the citizen's right of judgment concerning our affairs. You are incompetent to criticise this life, because you are not in it. Thus, too, if we refer to spiritual power, we refer to that which you do not possess, because you do not train it; whether by accident or design is not at present to the point, — your spiritual faculties are uneducated. You are disqualified from apprehending truth by means of powers which you have atrophied by disuse. These are facts; as such they ought to be respected.

Within this spiritual life, by means of exercised spiritual faculties acting upon and acted upon by our reason, we who believe cherish certain spiritual facts. God is one of these facts. The immortality of human souls is another. The responsibility of conscience is yet a third. The hope of a happy life everlasting is to be counted. The reasonableness of

Revelation we add. The saneness and usefulness of prayer we have certified. To the power of the personal life of Jesus Christ we thrill to offer witness. To the facts of forgiven sin and comforted bereavement we bear testimony. Is not a penitent and christianized thief as demonstrable as a clam or a comet? Is not the ecstasy of a martyr as real as the fagots that burn him? Is not the resignation of the desolate mourner as much a matter of proof as the coffin or the marble sleeper over which he weeps?

And yet but once again. As the body has its senses, so has the soul. Burns speaks of "those senses of the mind" by which great religious truths are apprehended. Spiritual truth is received by spiritual powers. Spiritual fact is perceived by the spiritual eye, heard by a spiritual ear, handled by spiritual touch. "The true saint," says Dr. Holmes, "can be entirely apprehended only by saintly natures."

We share with you the experience of the exercised physical senses, by which you and we alike perceive the physical fact. You do not as yet share with us — and we lay no claim to what is called "saintship" in assert-

ing this — the experience of the trained spiritual sense by which we receive the spiritual fact. To this extent and for this reason, are you as far qualified for making intelligent deductions from our premises as we for drawing such from yours?

In asking you to answer this, as an act of judicial fairness, we cannot refrain from adding that it would seem natural for a broad-minded and intelligent man to feel a certain discontent with the partial nature of his development. He who trains his body and exercises his brain, and *stops there*, is imperfect, unbalanced, crude. He who has not sought to develop his spiritual nature is a half-educated creature.

Spiritual power is the flower of the human growth. In spiritual character we find the highest, finest, and most complex form of the species. All other nature, whether physical or mental, is embryonic to spiritual nature. Spiritual culture is the culmination of human education.

We ask, therefore, evidences of this culture, as the first qualification in any man towards his becoming a critic of such nature, such

power, such character, or their philosophy. Failing of this culture, your science should, we submit, grant to our science the respect of ignorance, if not the attention of the student.

We have known invalids, prisoners of their inert muscles during all the bloom and brilliance of life. Some late-found medical inspiration, some personal surrender of devotion on the part of a friend, some unexpected joy or unimagined grief, or even some electric alarm, has allured, or shocked, or startled the sick man to his feet.

The power of motion was not dead, but slept. Late and loath though they be, the great flexile and extensor actions of the great muscles begin. Between the grave of his life and the grave of his death the man partakes of a resurrection.

Such a discovery of blessedness, we may suppose, comes to him who, after the sluggishness, or willfulness, or disease of unbelieving years, is led by the late cultivation of his spiritual faculties to the possession of spiritual truth.

Facts before which his intellect has been a blank illuminate his consciousness. Mysteries at which he sneered become shrines before which he kneels. Powers which he has not hitherto recognized magnify his nature. Hopes which he has never known irradiate his life. Contrition that he has not understood permeates his heart. Tenderness which he has never approached gives pathos, as it gives purity, to his past. A future of which he has never dreamed intensifies and glorifies his present. He learns the value of his own being, and experiences the friendship of God. In the closing days of his history, as in the final scenes of the apocalyptic vision, there are "new heavens and a new earth."

II.

IS GOD GOOD?

A TENDENCY to ask irreverent questions is no sign of strength. It is wholesome for us, in this day of facile defiance and hard acceptance, to remember this. In an age which fails in deference, it is a healthful thing to do, to summon our spiritual instincts to order. The bust of young Augustus in the shop window wears a lung protector; Clytie serves to advertise the "Boston battery;" and positivist writers go out of their way to address Jehovah by the familiar pronoun "you." We have not passed the period when skepticism is more apt than not to be regarded as a proof of superior intelligence, but we have reached the stage at which no intelligent mind can thus regard it, without severe and honest study of its own motives. It is a lesson as old as Aristotle that philosophy is not the art of doubting, but the art of doubting well.

While the inclination to irreverence, let us repeat, is no indication of mental robustness, the courage to question accepted doctrine may be not only a proof of devoutness, but the condition of the profoundest submission to truth.

This recognition of the inherent right of every man to have the reasons for what he believes, and to shake his destiny by the shoulders till he gets such reasons, is postulated today, in educated thought.

It is hardly necessary to say that it will not be the presumptuous object of this paper to try to settle in half a dozen pages that problem which is now the acknowledged centre of philosophical divergence: Given the universe, to find a Creator. "It takes me forty lectures," said a professional metaphysician, "to prove the personality of God." Such things must be. God is none the worse for it, or man, either, perhaps. The pulse will go throbbing; the blood will have its bound, through the cut flesh its escape. But even for the terrible protest of the wound there is the reply of the ligature; and behind the beat and fever the magnificent action of the hidden heart goes on to

save the mutilated life. We do not make a gloomy prognosis of the case, but, meanwhile, prefer to surrender ourselves to the profound and sublime argument of hope. We desire to be understood as intelligently contented to observe that design does not exist without a designer; that moral nature implies moral government; that moral government means a moral governor; that human conscience bespeaks a greater than human regulator; that aspiration involves an ideal, purity a model, the child a father, man God. We desire to be ranked among those simple souls who believe that this world never got where it is without somebody to put it here. In short, we find it, of the two difficulties, so much harder to explain the nature of things without God than with him that we decline at present to perceive that he is no longer needed in our affairs. Just before the American civil war, a new religion, it is said, arose among the negro slaves, founded upon the theory that God was dead. Much of our haste to dispense with him can boast no sounder premises. "I am a priest," said Victor Hugo's Cimourdain; "no matter, I believe in God." "God has gone out of

date," said Danton. "I believe in God," said Cimourdain, unmoved.

So much being understood, we may proceed to remind ourselves that the mere fact of having a God is of slight value to us unless we know what kind of a God he is.

The benevolence of the Creator, it is safe to assert, was never so thoughtfully questioned by such numbers of human beings as it is to-day. Openly or tacitly, this is done on every side of us. Falsely or fairly, many types of mind spring easily to this attitude. In hope or in despair, the awful query works out its fixed reply, and life freezes or melts to the mould of it. We should remember that this is so. The piercing cry of the people in Richter's Dream reëchoes about us: "*O Christ! Are we all orphans?*" Spiritual tragedies are enacting among us, to which none but an unimaginative, unobservant, or untender eye can be blind. Spiritual forms and forces which our fathers knew not, pursue us like unlaid ghosts. They start in the glamour of the drawing-room; they skulk behind the study chair; they hold the Prayer Book with trembling fingers; they kneel with the worshiper; they cry

in the hymn; they stare above our bridals; they look at us in the eyes of our children; they regard us in the last recognition of our dying; they huddle over our graves. To ignore them gives them a fatal fertility; to foster them is death; to feel out a true course among them is a "strait and narrow way." He who does this with intelligence and candor has to the respect of the unbeliever a right as clear as the right of the chemist to be followed in the results of his experiment. He who does this with humility and prayer has to the confidence of untroubled believers a right as clear as the ecstasy of an aged saint at the communion table.

There is no reason, in the nature of things, why a man should not question the benevolence of God. This may be done as honestly (I do not say as intelligently), and it may be done as honorably, as to question the good-nature of the Czar, or the poetic rank of Milton, or the disposition of any other being superior to the questioner.

God is an unknown force. He is expressed to us through facts. It is our right to interpret the nature of that force through these

facts. It is our duty to exercise this right in a manner worthy of a right so solemn, of facts so grave, of a force so vast.

Human impressions are of a singularly limited reliability, but if there is one which can be said to be trustworthy, it is that people know when they suffer. In the infinitely complicated system of pain and pleasure that governs this world we find, I premise, the emphatic predominance of pain. Did we not remember that there have been great teachers who deny (as there are those who admit) this, and that they have found important and noble disciples, we might presume that none but a shallow or selfish nature could fail to be aware of this predominance.

There are two ways of viewing such a system. It is natural to be chiefly struck with the sadness of it. It is possible to be chiefly moved by the error in it. It is thought by many people — the world contains no better — that the latter is the natural, as it should be the habitual, avenue by which an upright intelligence ought to approach the facts of life. This I doubt. It seems to me rather that it is mainly by its perception of pain that a

limited or created nature can constitute itself the appraiser of blame; and that precisely in proportion to the purity of a soul must the misery of a sight appeal in advance of the guilt of it. "I want," said the villain, in a thoughtful story, to the unsuccessful clergyman, who was opening his Testament upon him, — "I want to talk with a man whose first impulses are always warm towards the worst of men. Your best thoughts seem to be your second thoughts." "Do you know what keeps the gin palaces open?" cried the pure and consecrated Robertson. "Misery! The miserable go there to forget."

I should wish, however, to add that I believe so thoroughly in the reality of what we call sin, that I shall have nothing to say of it here as a disconnected fact in the human economy, but, in speaking of the miseries of life, shall class it, first and finally, as the greatest human misery that we know anything about.

There will be readers of an essay like this to whom it will seem that the uncandidness of unnecessary gloom pervades it, and that the distresses of life, upon which it is always possible to look from at least two sides, are pre-

sented with unfair emphasis. Be it said, once for all, that the writer is not unaware of the absence from this discussion of certain genial aspects of the world's mystery, nor of the slightness with which others are brought forward. It is my intention, at this time, to leave the task of urging these aspects to other hands. We are perhaps all of us more familiar with their force than with that of argument wrested from the reluctance of fate. Let it be ours, just now, to see what can be said for human life upon its darkest side. Let us look, for once, at the divine, as we often do at the human problem, and, taking things at their worst, see what our chances are. We do this, in the one case, for good cheer's sake. For good cheer's sake I ask to be trusted in saying we may do it in the other, too.

Further, I urge, especially, that we owe it to our faith to make it less easy than it is for shrewd atheists to say, "*Those who believe in a God of love must close their eyes to the phenomena of life, or garble the universe to suit their theory.*"

It not being our object to furnish a full index, or even a concordance, to the miseries

of mankind, I have selected only three avenues, from which, with merciful brevity, to approach our problem.

Let us review for a moment our impressions of the Creator, as received through the manifestations of natural law.

Nature is orderly, wise, beautiful, mysterious, terrible, remorseless, cruel. Surrender yourself to her awful moods. Test her at her tenderest. Try her at her strongest. Shall we bask in her midsummer sun? It is a fire from which we must guard ourselves as if from the very glory of an offended God. Would we have the iron of her snows in our blood? It is at our peril that they do not pierce our hearts. If the eternal resurrection of her spring does not pour freshets on our homes and mildew on our seeds, we kneel to thank her. If the red flags of her autumn wave no signals of disease or death about our firesides, we draw our held breath for another cycle of her seasons, and trust her still. She bestows the harvest at the chances of the famine. She gives her shine on condition of her storm. She blazons with beauty the heavens in which the bolt lurks to strike us down.

She stimulates our courage by her seas. She forms our fortitude by her deserts. She creates our nations by her mountains. The avalanche, the shipwreck, and the sirocco are the cost. Behind every blessing she hides its penalty. Beneath every faculty of mind and body she secures its denial. Every bestowal is a danger. Acceptance measures bereavement. Possession is the gauge of loss.

"Life," says a "scientific" historian, "is one long tragedy; creation is one great crime."

The holder of happier faiths must at least confess that the mass of evidence, in the great trial of Nature before the bar of man, is voluminous and stern. Forever the temperament will select for itself, and certain points in the case will intensify the *præjudicia* with which each of us comes to the hearing. There are some minds for which the gentlest caprice of the accused can never blot the memory of sternly isolated facts in her history. There are nicely poised perceptions to which the dark corners of her past are always unveiled. There are tenderly balanced sympathies for which no personal immunity from infliction

can muffle the wail of recorded anguish. It is probably through a small, finely varied, and strictly characteristic collection of illustrations that each of us practically views a subject like this. Is Nature merciful? It may be natural for you to give the historic answer, — to turn to ages when the world existed only for the propagation of monstrous animal growths, that breed, attack, rend each other, die, and give place to the next phase of apparently purposeless suffering. You recall primitive man, who dwelt in caves, like cubs; who was without intelligible speech or human sympathy, or the decency of any wild beast known to the observation of science. Or you think of the highly developed savage, whose language resembled the hissing of serpents; or of him, still ascending in the type, who fed upon the quivering flesh of live elephants, cultivated what is known as tribal marriage, and buried his dead with awful laughter; or of him whose war-phrase, being interpreted, signifies, "Let us go and eat that nation." Or you point to cities that confide in a crater, and in an hour are seething into lava, like the inorganic rock; or to those waste places where famine has

preceded the traveler, and where the starved corpses of entirely vanished communities offer him their gaunt hospitality.

Is Nature merciful? It may be that your impulse gives the poetic answer. You turn the query over to the tiger in the jungles, the death within the fruit, the venom in the thicket, the poison in the flower, the wreck beneath the sea, the plague upon the air. To many readers and lovers of Frederick Robertson his awful illustration of the ichneumon fly will stand apart in their minds, and reply for them with the convincing vividness by which single images fasten themselves upon a sensitive absorption of truth too painful to be endured in full.

The celebrated arraignment of the "great mother" by Stuart Mill will be well remembered: —

"Nature impales men, breaks them as if on the wheel, casts them to be devoured by wild beasts, burns them to death, crushes them with stones like the first Christian martyrs, starves them with hunger, freezes them with cold, poisons them by the quick or slow venom of her exhalations, and has hundreds of other hideous

deaths in reserve, such as the ingenious cruelty of a Nabis or a Domitian never surpassed. All this Nature does with the most supercilious disregard both of mercy and of justice, emptying her shafts upon the best and noblest indifferently with the meanest and the worst; . . . often as the direct consequences of the noblest acts, and it might almost be imagined as a punishment for them."

Is Nature merciful? It may be easy for you to proffer the judicial reply. You remember her immense and kindly recuperative force: that the grass grows over her extinct volcano, that the harvest follows the furrow or the freshet, that the agitation of her oceans creates her temperature, that gorgeous beauty crowns the terrors of her tropics, that the snow protects the seed, that time restores the ruin of her cyclones, that flowers seek her graves, that death itself preserves her from the asphyxia of her superfluous life. You recall the exquisite system of development by which she is manifested to human knowledge; you observe that ages of animal pleasure and pain went to the preparation of the globe for the habitation of rudimentary races, that in

their turn peopled the earth and perished from it to make way for men who could master it, who also yielded to others who had the mastery of them, who have themselves vanished before our blossoming civilization, as ours shall vanish before the symmetry of the future form. You have been taught by faith, as you are taught over again to-day by science, that the world is steadily becoming a better place to live in; that the sum of its happiness absolutely increases; and that the "sacrifice consumed," the cost at which the glory of the future shall be reached, has been what we are accustomed to call "worth while."

Nevertheless, is Nature merciful? Let us be just to her; but for myself, whenever I hear those three words, three things present themselves to my imagination, — the pant of a hunted hare, the look in the eye of a lost dog, and the heart of a woman towards a man who would betray her.

Is Nature merciful? The intellect of a child can accuse her. Goethe at an infant age did as much. The subtlety of a seer cannot defend her. Wordsworth would have done it, if any man could. The abyss of her harshness is deeper than Rydal Lake.

Take, again, — it is not an abrupt transition, — our views of the Great Designer as affected by the relation of the sexes. This is a subject upon which words must be few, but impressions deep. It is a commonplace to say that nothing contributes so far to either the happiness or the misery of the race as this sole incident in its development.

From the Abyssinian bride sold by her husband for a weapon, an ornament, a dinner, to the last victim of a *mariage de convenance* in civilized life, what a sealed and awful book! From the heart of Dante, of Abelard, of Vittoria Colonna, to the blush of the little lass betrothed in a country lane last week, what a range of capacity for what is called joy! I scarcely hesitate before saying that the attraction between man and woman cannot be presumed to have added to the delight, in proportion as it has intensified the denial, of existence. We may be quite willing to intrust this assertion to the happiest lover in the world, provided his happiness be of that sensitive sort which does not shut out the apprehension of other people's deprivation. Since, were he not the most sensitive, he could not

be the happiest; and were he the most sensitive, he would be the most sympathetic. It would be almost enough, in this connection, to suggest the inherent vagrancy of the affectional instinct in man, and the historic constancy of woman. What ingenuity could surpass that involved in this one exquisite invention of actual or possible anguish?

It would be almost enough to take one absolute look at the heart of an honorable man who, in an hour of beautiful delusion, has wedded an insincere woman.

It would be almost enough to shut the eyes before the conflicts of a pure heart, to which the supreme attraction occurs, when every law of God or man has welded it to the claim of the less.

It would be almost enough to look into the face of a drunkard's wife.

It would be more than enough to hear the cry of the deserted girl, who leaped to a death more merciful at its worst than life at its best to her.

It would be unjust not to recall the heavy pressure of happiness against the scale of the question, involved in pure betrothals, bridal

hours, assured domestic content, the experience of tried and calm affections, the bliss of young parents, the rejuvenation of age in its offspring, and the repose of those for whom the prayer of Tobit has been answered: "Mercifully grant that we may grow aged together."

But it would be illogical not to observe the intricate *insecurity* of the happiest hour that history could be shown to have given to the most fortunate affections of the race. It would be almost enough to watch the countenance of the radiant young mother, who, her children leaning about her, at her fireside, hears suddenly grating upon their laughter the discordant sound of a croupy cough.

It would be almost enough to stand with the father of motherless babes by the first gash life has ever cut in the churchyard turf for him.

It would be almost enough to avert the face from a meeting between pure parents and a ruined son.

It would be almost enough to remember the mystery of womanhood, so "heavily weighted, in the race of life," as a great scientist of our day expresses it, by maternity.

It would be almost enough to follow the red feet of war to the obscure life of one widowed girl.

It would be enough to watch the process of descent by which a betrothal ever reaches a divorce.

Look once more at our impressions of their First Cause as received from the sufferings of the lower classes of society. These are "facts" before which the wisest, the tenderest, the healthiest, the most joyous, and the most devout among us may well wish for the wings of the seraphim in the sacred story; of whom it is said that "with twain they covered their faces, and with twain they covered their feet, and with twain they did fly."

A miniature bust of Michael Angelo's Slave stands as a paper-weight upon the MS. which this pen is tracing. The pose of the mutilated head, the droop of the swollen eyelids, the quiver of the pitiful mouth, the protest of the thoughtful brow, present themselves, so many mute arguments, appealing to be used. The bit of plaster is an unanswered accusation. It bewails the mystery of human captivity, of which the enslaving of man by man

was the rudest form, as the ministration of one portion of the race to-day to the leisure of the other is the most lenient. From the first captive mother condemned to murder her own child, to the last poor wretch who sold her soul to buy bread for her family; from the slave at the galley-oar, in the seraglio, under the lash, facing the blood-hound, on the auction-block; to the factory-girl with the "cotton-cough," the miner in the fire-damp, the poisoned "hand" in the lead-works, or the child of four years rolling cigars for a passionate or drunken overseer, — there is a range of sheer human *fear*, which it is not easy to contemplate either with or without an explanation of its existence.

From the filthy shiverers who shared the straw of the feudal hovel with their donkey or their goat, to the Irish laborer evicted at mid-winter from the home of his life-time; from the temperate and diligent American family found to have lived for three months on bread and water, to the all too real "little Joe" of Dickens, or the "abused child" in any of our Christian cities, habituated to sufferings which it would blot this page to repeat; from

the poor woman who told Octavia Hill that she chose her deadly cellar because "it lay between ninepence and the sun" to the six hundred and twenty-three descendants of an ignorant girl, now famous and infamous to social science as "Pauper Margaret;" from the great causes of the English corn-law resistance, or the Reign of Terror, to the Nihilist passion fermenting beneath the Winter Palace, or the New York tenement house (sinister forerunner of revolution!), where four families occupy one room, and wherein, by mathematical estimate, there belongs to each living being under the roof a space on the floor's surface measuring eight feet by four, — there is a margin for simple human *endurance*, upon which it is not agreeable, either with or without its obverse relief, to dwell.

On this obverse, it were uncandid not to remember, are pale and pleasant compensations to benignant thought. Beyond a certain point, deprivation unquestionably dulls susceptibility, denial teaches endurance, obscurity preserves from responsibility, the transient pleasure is more emphatic, the finer foreboding perhaps less acute, aspiration cools into acceptance, and ignorance stratifies into repose.

It is not a grateful task to remind people how unfortunate they are. One who seems to undertake it must expect to be accused of pessimism (chiefly by those persons who cannot be said, even for politeness' sake, to know what a pessimist is), and of "morbidness," — a word which apparently has been made to cover whatever form of viewing fact differs from one's own. "Of course," said a great writer of his own sad, honest look at life, — "of course it is exaggerated to those who feel feebly." "Let no man counsel me," said Sophocles, "but who has felt sorrow like mine." Nevertheless, it must be repeated that no consistent philosophy, no trained imagination, no instructed memory, no sensitive sympathy, and no intelligent religious trust can deny this to be a state of manifold, mysterious, and unmeasured suffering. It is a doctrine no newer than Plato that all our pleasure consists in an escape from pain.

The very failure of the pen in a space so small, before a subject so enormous, writes deeper and darker than its fluency could mark. The very sinking of the heart before a strain so tense upon its nerve; the very

impulse which leads two kinds of people, the dull and the fortunate — or, we might add a third, the cold — into their clamor about the beauty and happiness of the world, itself accentuates the great onrolling sound of the truth, like the voices of children on the shore, which increase while they defy the roar of the breaker.

It will be remembered that we have touched with a reticent and sparing finger upon what might be called three key-notes in the great discords of life: the cruelty of nature, the mystery of sex, and the misery of the poor. It will be seen that these present but a portion of the lost harmonies around which the chords of human suffering clash. It will be observed that of the great facts of heredity we have said nothing at all; that to the immense influence of physical disease on happiness we have scarcely alluded; that we have passed by all those finer phases of our question which have led metaphysicians to maintain that life is a continual vacillation between displeasure and *ennui;* that we have omitted the acute historical illustrations of human woe; that we have avoided the whole train of thought sug-

gested by institutions of charity, penalty, and mental healing; that we have not dwelt upon the obstinate argument of suicide; that we have not considered the terrible phenomena of remorse; that we have not brooded upon the pitiless and inexorable sentence of death which has gone out against every breathing creature on the earth. It will be acknowledged that we have spared ourselves in the task of "looking the worst in the face."

The most irrecoverable "blue" in philosophy could not venture to overlook the sum of the world's enjoyment, if only for the mathematical reason that a given amount of it represents so much less weight than the same amount of misery. The colors of lakes, the scents of blush roses, — who could forget? — are ever with us. The radiance of lovers' eyes and the laughter of children we may not miss. The comforts of ease and the vagaries of wealth are present to us, and though the invalid poor die for lack of beef tea, it is a fixed fact that a velvet suit for a doll can be purchased to-day for fifteen dollars. But it should not be forgotten that, so far as we are able judicially to estimate questions affecting our emotions, pain

"goes farther," as our idiom has it, in this world than pleasure. This the great inductive philosopher, experience, teaches, at least to the more sensitive of the species, early in life.

Up to a certain degree, pain passes over the suffering cells of the brain without disintegrating them; but there comes a limit, as clear to the individual consciousness as it is difficult to make over to that of another, beyond which the best that fate could offer could not atone for the worst she has inflicted. Wise men may dispute this nice point to the world's end. It would be possible to select one bereaved mother, who might call them all as scholars to her feet. A great sufferer *knows* that he can set single hours of his life against the accumulated happiness of its years. He *knows* that the one, considered in its cold, intellectual character as a fact of consciousness, outweighs the other, sinking as far below it as the sod is from the stars. This knowledge is no more to be taken from him than his soul. He would go to the bar of God with it.

There is yet another thing, which the gayest optimist of us all would do well, in a discussion like this, to bear in mind. The charm of

nature, the glory of love, and the pride of life are facts of which a Creator, presumably not kindly inclined towards his creatures, would be presumptively sure to avail himself. He would not be a very shrewd Deity who, with malevolent intentions, should create a world of ugliness, hate, and unmitigated deprivation.

Such a God would be too wise to construct a system of unrelieved woe. He would exultantly deepen pain by a background of pleasure. He would fiendishly emphasize loss by experience of possession. He would create hope as a foil against despair. The color of the lily, the kiss of a child, the delirium of love, it might be his horrible ingenuity to hold as what artists call "values" against the tornado, and the tooth of famine and the grave.

Conceptions like these, almost enough to congest imagination, *might* be true, though not in the same measure, of the moral nature of man. It is conceivable that up to a certain extent, at least, good impulses might have been created for evil ends. There is a large border-land of moral conflict, wherein our worst assaults seem to come on the wings of angels of light. It is conceivable that a

maleficent God would bestow upon us aspiration to create in us remorse, and allow us to strive for purity that he might the more exquisitely gloat over our surrender to guilt.

It is not easy for a reverent mind to glance into this pit, even to heighten by contrast the dazzle of the ether up to which the devout heart looks.

But it seems to me that if there is any being of whom we need to know the worst that *could* be said, our Creator is that Being. A faith that will not bear for once firmly to regard the blackest possibilities of our destiny does not deserve their brightest.

For the reasons given, as well as for those which must be omitted from a study of this kind, the reader will follow me in saying that the miseries and mysteries of human life being what they are, and our conceptions of the Creator being, as they must be, drawn to so large an extent through misery and mystery, the simple *fact* of the faith of mankind in his fair intentions is in and of itself as powerful a proof of his goodwill as we are likely to obtain, — a far more powerful one than all the limp religious impulse that could be wrung out of a system in

which ease and pleasure predominated. It does not seem to me that we are in the habit of giving to this aspect of the question anything like the dignity or the force which, as an argument, it deserves.

I do not refer to what is known as the intuitive argument for God, which lies quite behind us in the discussion. Let us call this rather the argument of acquired trust. It would seem to be the consequence of experience rather than its prelude. The child, in the first blow from a father's hand, perceives nothing but an evidence of cruelty. Youth, hot-headed and quick-hearted, upon the first important occasion when its wishes are crossed, flashes out its protest against Providence. Maturity only builds up confidence, and old age alone knows peace.

We find it to be the law of divine denial that it not only does not obliterate, it creates, the phenomenon of human belief. The final test of love is trust under apparent desertion. This absolute trial it has been God's mysterious purpose to impose upon man. Man has stood the test. Deep as he wades in the tide of error, wide as he gropes in the gloom of

doubt, low as he sinks in the mud of sin, nevertheless, man has stood the test.

There are lives of which we say, in the unconscious bitterness of common speech, that they are "pursued by Providence." The religious resignation of such lives partakes of the nature of miracle. Our wildest outcry against fate goes down before the patience of the deaf-mute or the cheerfulness of the blind, or the trust of an invalid, buried alive for forty years in a "mattress grave," in the tenderness of the Power that fixed him there.

When life selects a sensitive and silent and untaught woman, whose whole being beyond its affectional side is rudimentary, of whom we should say that it were a severity to expect her to breast a snow-storm alone, — when fate selects such a woman, and bruises her stroke by stroke, leaving her widowed, leaving her childless, dragging her through the extremes of poverty, adding sickness, inventing friendlessness, threatening insanity, and denying death, and we find her peacefully and affectionately on her knees before a Being whom she never saw, whom she never heard, whom she never touched, but to whom alone she can attribute

the inquisition of her life, — let us drop upon our own, beside her; there is no higher place that our nicest logic is fit for, before the *argument* of such a fact as she.

Life presents too many illustrations of this miracle of human trust for us to be able to set them aside as exceptions. They form a serried rank, advancing upon our doubts like the armed angels whom the prophet saw in the golden air. It is not to our purpose now to dwell upon the extent to which Christianity has cultivated this trust. It is enough at present that, from whatever origin and by whatever support, it exists. The fact that *one* sane mind, under the extremity of fate, developed the *habit* of joyous confidence known to the higher forms of religious culture were something before which a doubter with a fine eye must ponder long.

It would seem that the fact that life abounds, has always abounded, with this confidence, rises, as I have said, to the region of the supernatural. It is less human than divine. It assures us of the divine in our Maker by the divine in ourselves. It is the fire of heaven — Prometheus never knew it — given at last to man.

What merely human friendship (I ask it reverently) could stand the strain which God has seen fit to put upon our friendship for himself?

What human affection *increases* under the infliction by its object of unexplained and life-long pain?

True, we know instances in which our little loves for one another seem to have survived every attack upon them, — that of the wife for a brutal husband, that of a mother for a heartless child; but such is not the law of our natures.

Faith requires faith. Tenderness demands the tender. Truth claims the true; and ought to claim it, and will. Even in the rarest forms of self-abnegation known to human fondness, repeated signs of coldness or unkindness wear out *trust*. Trust is the last and highest manifestation of the divine. Even our conceivable malignant Deity would pause before the creation of a state of character in which *trust* — trust in purity, trust in beauty, trust in love, trust in himself as the essence of these holy things — had become the all-pervading and the all-powerful element; im-

mediate as the light, and strong as the wind, and tender as tears, and firm as the eternal rock. He would have created a character mightier than himself. He would have created his own God. The hells, whether of time or eternity, could work no death upon such a character. It would pass out of them like the three men in the old story from the furnace of living fire.

The ultimate religious tenderness of man towards God is a thing too high, too pure, too reasonable, to have sprung from any source less than himself. It must not be forgotten that this trust involves a state of feeling in man which puts the fact that he has hurt God to the front of his consciousness that God has hurt him. Even supposing it to be true that mere human longing for happiness, in itself considered, should not philosophically offer the promise of satisfaction, it is not rational that the panting human thirst for *holiness*, implied in the whole scheme by which the confidence of mankind in the mercy of its Creator has been developed, should be the offshoot of anything other than a God who deserved it.

Is it not conceivable that the creation of precisely such a type of character as this exact kind of trust signifies were worth the cost at which it has been built up?

Is it not altogether possible that the rounded development of such a character demands a far more straightforward look at the painful facts of life than we are taught to give them by that pseudo-philosophy which substitutes superficial cheerfulness for searching truthfulness? We are not asked to writhe ourselves into the belief that this is a happy world. We are asked peacefully to admit that it was not meant to be a happy one. We are not lured, like girls, to love our Creator because he treats us indulgently. We are expected, like soldiers, to love him, although he treats us sternly. We are required to discover the characteristics of a loving and faithful parent in the appearance of a severe and mysterious ruler.

> It is the human task
> To find the father's smile
> Behind the monarch's mask.

Regarded carefully, this is a fine tribute of respect to the race.

It must not be forgotten that the scientific basis of human trust in the Creator is one of belief in a life to succeed this.

This is as much as to say that pain is more formative than pleasure of spiritual character, and of faith which is the distinct resultant of such character.

On the whole, for most of us this is practically true. They are rare people who can bear great good-fortune. Sustained happiness, as our phrase goes, spoils us; only the select natures sweeten, strengthen, and mature under it. There seems to be a law, not unlike certain analogies in nature, by which the human plant requires a winter.

Philosophically, too, it is easy to see that pain rather than joy leads to that *desire* for another life which might underlie the capacity for one. "A soul sodden with pleasures" does not soar. A continuance of limited happiness is no spur towards the attainment of the unlimited. All social history proves this. Man unstung by deprivation saunters through his little possibility. The ascetic conqueror succumbs to the luxurious vices of the conquered. He who lives under a bread-fruit

tree invents no grain-elevators. Very near the surface lies at least one sound reason why the race finds itself in what Kant called a "never-ceasing pain." This opens close upon all the ancient and great discussions clustering about the value of force and activity. It is enough for our purposes to say that it is natural to accept pleasure; it is natural to escape pain. If this world had been made for the many what it is for the few, given to the deprived as it is to the fortunate; if life for any of us had been what its ideals are, what but a miracle could have given us a compelling interest in a world beyond? In short, if we had been provided with the materials of content, where should we have found the materials of aspiration?

Modern science has itself unwittingly invented one of the best of testimonies to the benevolence, if not the beneficence, of the Creator, in acknowledging the compulsion which it has found laid upon itself of evolving human happiness out of human suffering. *Somewhere*, keen eyes have perceived, a keen intellect must meet this demand. *Somehow*, it must be done. Whatever this globe was

put here for, it was not for failure. Whatever the unit was made for, the race was not made for hopelessness. However black the past, however blind the present, a bright future is a philosophical necessity.

The individual, we are told, withers and dies. The type roots and renews. The blood-red pages of history, closed, sealed, and forgotten, give way to the fair hieroglyphs of prophecy, cold, golden, and calm. Let us be content to suffer, that our posterity may enjoy. Let us be satisfied with our dulled capacity, our imperfect faculty, our little knowledge, our lost ideal, our pitiful hope, our puny achievement, since they who come after us shall grow like grass from our decay. Let us endure, enjoy, strive, sing, bleed, smile, and go to our graves gratefully. Over our dumb and witless ashes a select and proud race, with the beauty of pagan gods, shall walk haughtily, and with the scorn of the gods shall remember us as we remember the savage, whose war-shouts assisted in developing the fine, human larynx, to contribute to the modulations in the voice of Malibran.

It is significant that temperaments easily

appeased by the best that unbelieving science has to offer have been compelled to devise what, for want of a better term, we may call a humane purpose in the creation of this world. Clumsily as they have succeeded, it is not we who should overlook the fact that they have tried. It is memorable that they have been forced to tender even this pitiful substitute for personal immortality; nay, they have added the "invention of immortality," whatever that may mean, to the list of attractions held out to the disciples of their meagre faith. It is important that even so awkward a contrivance is presented to us in place of the perfect mechanism of eternal hope. Natural selection has not yet eliminated the quiver from the human lip, which makes it hard to frame the imaginary answer that Strauss makes to Frederick the Great: "Pardon, sire, but I have no desire to go to heaven at all."

Human trust, we observed, in divine mercy is postulated on belief in a life to come. This is also to say that the disadvantages of this life are so many arguments for the evolution from it of another; properly presented, an unassailable position, which this is no place to elaborate.

The mourner smiles, because she looks forward to comfort. The sufferer endures, because he expects relief. The imperfectly happy yearns for the maturity of joy. The guilty hopes, because he anticipates purity. Each confides in a Being who is both able and willing to bestow these sequels on pleasure, pain, and sin.

It is the aim of the believer to cultivate this confidence as the most important fact of his life. It is more real to him than his sorrow; it is more near to him than his remorse. Familiarity cannot wrest it from him. Unlooked-for anguish cannot shock it out of him. The hurling of temptation upon temptation cannot weaken it in him. Death cannot bury it with him. Eternity shall justify it for him.

Is God good? If this sublime trust, itself a marvel only less than himself, be the fond and fatal delusion of a pitiful ignorance, a phantasm of the emotions, a movement of the blood, a secretion of the brain, *no*. *No*, if the bravest delights this earth can muster are all that men can confidently call their own. *No*, if the sum of our misery is the sum of our days. *No*, if the tale of earth's error is "the end of the song."

If joy has no permanence, if anguish no comfort, if sin no cure, no, and a thousand times no!

If aspiration has no perfect blossom, if power no mellow fruit, if hope no sound justification; if denial never becomes delight; if despair never turns to ecstasy; if love knows no resurrection, and purity no assured vitality, and faith no throne, no, — to the last breath, *no!*

Is there Love at the heart of the world? Is there law in this Love? Is there joy in this law? *Yes*, if the blighted seed of our experience be sown to the blessed harvest of another. Yes, if time be a cipher to which eternity gives the key. Yes, if the virile hope of a life without an end be the measure of the mystery of the splendor of the truth. Yes, if he who permitted this world has promised the other. Yes, at the strain of extremity, in the blackness of darkness, to the last outcry of endurance and the last throb of belief, — *yes!*

O you who have given us a counterfeit of human hope, who have stuffed an effigy of human happiness, who have composed a parody on human dignity, we suffer you, without fear, to

set these against the gold, the heart-beat, and the song! What is the best your first can offer, beside the least our lowest can command? What has the king, the priest, or the prophet of your dreary creed to look to, compared with the promise open to the obscurest human soul that knows itself a deathless thing? "A cripple in the right way," Bacon has reminded us, "may beat a racer in the wrong." A believing pauper would be insane to change places with him who may be your "advanced" Herbert Spencer of two thousand years to come, though that highly developed being were to be all that you expect, if he is to cease where you anticipate. A slave with a heaven were happier than Shakespeare without.

We suffer you, without disturbance, to explain to us how the physiology of the future is to extend the realm of matter, till it is coextensive with knowledge, with feeling, and with action; to tell us of the prospect of that heavenly commune, "in which men will reserve for themselves not even a hope, not even the shadow of a joy," — in which "all is at an end for the speck of flesh and blood with the little spark of instinct which it calls mind;" to

call our attention to the growth of the "great unit," man, the sacrifice of generation for generation, of the species for the type, of the fraction for the whole. One hour's hope of the believer's Paradise is worth it all.

It is a well-mannered comfort that you offer us, like the smile of a woman in evening dress on a man who has an appointment with the surgeon. We recognize your courtesy, but we choose the warm clasp of a living human hand.

Your cold voices have a hollow echo. They sound afar off, to us, and thin. Their clamor faints about our imperious human need. Who would exchange even the *delusion* of eternal life for the apotheosis of death?

If to expectance we add assurance, how can we pause for your bleak interruption?

Hope is not proof, but it is argument. Conviction is not demonstration, but it is enlightenment. "He had learned," it is said of Goethe, "that faith goes farther than knowledge."

How naturally the compass swings on its pivot to the pole! How joyously the heart which has cultivated the spiritual faculty of

faith turns, from the obstacles thrust between the love of God and the love of man, to the region where these two elemental facts of the universe become one mighty current!

Astronomy tells us of systems lighted by colored suns, — green, sapphire, and ruby. From the lurid airs of a crimson world we seem to ourselves to return to the peace and the power of absolute and homelike light.

"The love of God," said Ecclesiasticus, in a profound moment, "passeth all things for illumination." We recall, with a stir at the heart which transforms the severe philosophical language, what a great thinker has told us of "the absurdity of the passions and the littleness of all that is not God." We can understand Spinoza, of whom it is said that he was "intoxicated with God." The whole being bounds like the cripple at the Gate Beautiful, whom the apostle healed. Our eternal liberty draws its value from the prospect of acquaintance with him who is behind our mutilated life. Here is the secret of the high reticence of knowledge, never to be conquered, always to be sought. Here is the essence of all the solemn ideals of love, never overtaken, never possessed,

forever to be won. Here is the source of the white waters of purity, an eternal thirst for which demands, deserves, and shall receive an eternal supply.

If everlasting hope be the possibility and the promise to the race, *anything* that the maker of an ephemeral system chooses to insert in it cannot philosophically be made a ground of complaint. "There can no evil befall a good man either in life or death," said Socrates, going to the root of the matter. "If I believed as you do," cried a doubter, looking at me with the uncomforted eyes of her class, "*nothing* would daunt me!" She was right, if only as a matter of pure algebra. "Omit eternity in your estimate of area," urged a mathematician, "and your conclusion is wrong." No equation can be constructed out of this and the eternal life. Limited pain cannot be set against illimitable happiness, nor transient stain against permanent purity. If heaven follows earth, man is dumb before God.

How gentle thought grows in the climate of hope! Seen in the atmosphere of trust, the countenance of life is changed. Re-read in the

light of love, the story of the world flashes into an illuminated text.

The imagination learns to stir reticently about the details of the dreariest fate. The sympathy yearns more and more peacefully towards the woe which it cannot forget or relieve. The heart surrenders to mystery, and cultivates content. We wrest the habit of cheer from the teeth of denial. We educate the impulse of happiness, and fling challenges to grief. We dwell upon the little joys of life. We count the forgotten ease. We seek the "hid treasure." We remember the temperaments that grief passes by upon the other side, the lives which acute temptation shuns, memories that naturally do not absorb the unpleasant, hearts that are easily light. We recall the grave delights of a consciously forming character, the strength and fineness of the military quality that conflict only cultivates, the stern beauty of endurance, the high glow of self-sacrifice, the peace and power of prayer, the grandeur of hardly acquired holiness. We find ourselves unable to think of these things apart from their embryonic character. We remember that they develop deathless forces.

We remember that they go to constitute undying spirits. Pain viewed in the loftiness of its purpose does not seem to be the worst thing in the world. Idealized by heaven, earth stands transfigured. Life becomes a privilege, glorious in proportion as it is a test of trust-capacity and enduring power. That mysterious quality which in its physical form physicians call *vitality*, and for which they cherish an almost religious respect, has a spiritual counterpart, which we learn to recognize as the proudest possession that a man can own. All that he hath though he give for it, he will not count the cost. It is like one of those Chinese crystals, rounded by attrition with grains of sand, of which we are told that it takes the life-time of one workman to make a perfect specimen.

An eye-witness of a peculiarly heart-rending shipwreck once stood depicting to a circle of friends, with vitriolic vividness, the struggles of men who clung, in an icy sea, on a mid-winter day, five hours and a half to a glazed rock, at which the surf was tearing like the teeth of hate. A listener, lifting the half-melancholy, half-scornful look of one who has weighed life and found it wanting, interrupted,

"Fools to cling! Fools to cling!" "No!" flashed another, turning upon him with a movement which I know not how to describe as other than radiant; it was like the sweep of light on darkness. "No; while there was hope of life, PHILOSOPHERS *to cling!*"

Fools, then, or philosophers, — we are content to leave the choice of terms to the great heart and sound sense of humanity, — we cling to the sane, strong, *reasonable* hope of everlasting life.

The wave will have its roar. The breaker will overwhelm the sinking face. The hands may slip, bleed, freeze; *but they will cling.*

It is human to cling; it is divine to cling; it is instinct; it is reason; it is the blind brute motion of nature; it is the last fine finish of knowledge.

If there *is* a rock, though all but sunk beneath the surf, a drowning hand will find it. Before the argument of life the negation of death sweeps on and seethes away, like a thwarted wave.

Upon this rock, at the ebb of the tide, in the calm of the day, we leave the exigencies of fate. To it we bring the worst of dread, the

dreariest of doubt, the climax of pain, the fever of sin. To it we take the promise of our imperfect joys, the blight of our unripe content, the recoil of our rebuffed aspiration, the disturbance of our broken repose. From it we regard the unknown Author of mystery with the high beat of trustful hearts. Earth is a student in what the great Frenchwoman called "the science of God." Life is like the Tamil grammar, which reached the ideal of scholarship in its solemn preface: "To God, the eternal, almighty Jehovah, and author of speech, be glory forever and ever."

It is hardly possible to close a paper like this without reminding ourselves once again, quite clearly, that with the remarkable conformations of the Christian Scriptures towards our subject, it has not been our purpose to deal. But it can scarcely be overlooked that to believers in revealed truth it is difficult to perfect the separation of thought which we have selected.

There is a powerful protest of the heart, which in asking, "Does my friend love me?" insensibly slides into "What will he do for me?" or even into "What *has* he done for

me?" Man, in his extremity, exerts his solemn right to carry this appeal of his nature reverently up. What will God do for him? Everlasting life leans down to answer. What *has* God done for him? A Carpenter from Nazareth can reply.

III.

WHAT DOES REVELATION REVEAL?

THE Bible above most, perhaps above all books that have been written, has temperament. It piques, attracts, repels, confuses. It draws upon attention and patience. It disciplines negligence. It puts fine spurs to motive. One must take time to win the individuality of it. It is a liberal education to learn how to live with it.

The Bible is not a primer. It is no easy reading for beginners. The mere alphabet of either knowledge or feeling cannot fit a man to do anything better with this book than to take it or leave it on trust from his own moral instinct. "No man who knows nothing else," a scholar has told us, "knows even his Bible."

The Bible, we say, is a difficult book. This should be admitted fairly, in justice to it, to belief, and to believers. It is a powerful appeal to the emotions, but it is more than that.

It is a strenuous influence upon conduct, but it is yet different from that. It is a challenge to the intellect of the race.

It is one of the signs of a successful book that the reader employs himself in thinking how he would have done it differently, and it would be a laughable problem in psychological algebra to estimate the number and kinds of persons who would like to show the Creator how to write his over again. How many of us, in the deep below the lowest deep that underlies sub-consciousness, believe that we could have made a better Bible than we possess?

Students of the subject have drawn a distinction familiar to most of us, between Revelation, Inspiration, and the Bible, but for convenience the term Revelation is used in this paper in its commonly accepted sense, as descriptive of that especial form of divine manifestation known to us as the Christian Scriptures.

The moment that a man undertakes to judge what he would do if he were a God, he must, of necessity, put God in the position of doing as if he were a man; but so far as we can

assert what might, could, would, or should be possible to a supposed Creator in a case like this, we may say that, in extending such a revelation of his nature or purposes to us, God had two methods open to him.

He might have selected the miraculous method. He might have inscribed truth upon the firmament, in eternal characters that the mind and eye of man should have been educated to interpret. The stars of heaven might have composed his awful alphabet ; planet and comet and sun, nebula and meteor, might have formed and punctuated those mystical words ; each heavenly body might, without interference with its individual destiny or value, have been by a divine freak so blocked out as to contribute to the formation of the magnificent characters which were to enlighten this small and ignorant planet that we happen to call our own. At twilight, men might have stood to watch the splendor of these hieroglyphs deepen down into the night, and read, "The heavens are the work of thy fingers," where now they glance at the flaming frame-work of the southern cross ; or spelled out, "God is love," where we idly follow Venus rising from the sea.

Or God might have uttered truth articulately to human ears. He might have taught the waves of the sea a celestial syntax to which terrestrial hearing should be attuned. The volcano might have been tamed to use his dread vocabulary. The sirocco and the cyclone might have spoken with an inexorable definiteness. Hail might have cried rebuke. Flowers might have whispered comfort. Birds might have sung of heaven. Men might have bowed to catch the least accent of the midnight wind in desert places, while it called: "Fear thou not, for I am with thee." Or we might have listened to the mighty lips of Niagara chanting, to what a musician claims to have discovered as the "Niagara chord," a *Gloria in Excelsis Deo* which the heart would have stood still to hear.

Or the awful veil between this and the unknown world might have been rent in twain. The mute lips of the grave might have moved. The dead might have answered to the wail of the ages. Our starved arms might have clasped them for the instant which would have been worth all agony.

"Oh, for five minutes with my Jean!"

cried Carlyle, desolate upon his fame. Mystery could have relented and silence spoken, the famine of the heart been fed, the palsy of the faith been freed. We need not have beaten the breath of our souls out against the barred gates of death. "The touch of a vanished hand" could have set at rest our dreariest doubt forever. From the sealed lips of our dearest dead we could have learned, and never questioned after, who is the Resurrection and the Life.

One other method was open to God in extending a special revelation to man. He could act upon the legal fibre of the world. It was in his power to pursue a course of conduct in harmony with his own system; to act in accordance with laws which he had already established; to reach man by human means; to avoid, as far as possible, the shock and strain of admitting what we are accustomed, with great looseness of phraseology, to call higher laws; to neglect in the main the sporadic and the startling; to respect premise and conclusion, form and dignity; to select the orderly method of revealing, as he did the same in creating, as he does in preserving,

as he has in governing. This he has selected. It will be found, I think, if we consider carefully, that he has adopted the natural method, with such emphatic distinctness as to leave us astonished at the chiaro-oscuro theories which theology has struggled to impel upon the credulity or reluctance of the world, as media of approach to a comparatively simple fact.

The Bible, in short, is not a miracle.

It is not too much to say that many, if not most, of the polemic mistakes made by the opponents of the Christian Revelation have their root in the assumption that it claims to be a miracle. Skeptical exegesis had the supreme opportunity of the century in her hands when the growth of modern thought struggled, like a Chinese child malformed in an earthen vase, against distorting theories of inspiration.

Instead of toiling with her mythical theory, her legendary theory, her naturalistic theory, her literary theory, dissent might have turned upon us and said: "Your Bible is not outside of law, but within it, and yet your Bible still." But, since unbelief lacks the constructive imagination, as well as the spiritual preju-

dice clearly necessary to such a result, it has been left for the slower but subtler scholarship of modern faith to give to the world the only theories upon which it can hope a hundred years hence to keep any Bible at all.

It would be difficult to find another word in the language which has been so wrenched as the word inspiration. It may belong to that series comprising God, the Soul, Immortality, of which it has been said that they never can present the same idea to any two minds; but let us take the liberty of doubting this, and say, rather, that inspiration offers as much fixity and definiteness to thought as any other kind of development can. What we call inspiration is a growth. It unfolds with history and like history. It is subject to evolution, like the race. It develops like the body, of which the particles undergo renewal every few years, yet it remains the same body still. What it was, it is, and is not now. What it is it will, and yet it will not, be in fifty years.

In the matter of Biblical inspiration, if in any, we are to expect change as we have experienced it, in applied scholarship, in deepening wisdom, in spiritual illumination, and in

the laws of interpretation as affected by these things and others not yet within the scope of our perception. There is no life without change. Inspiration is the breathing in of life.

It would be as impossible for the thoughtful world to hold to-day that attitude toward the Bible which appears, for instance, in the Augsburg Confession, as it would have been for Solomon to write Butler's Analogy, or for Noah to have built an elevated railway. But it would be equally impossible for the Bible to hold the same attitude toward the world. If it had proved an obstinate thing, it would now be an obsolete one. If there had been no moral elasticity in it, it would before this have been as dead as the worship of Moloch. Life is motion, renewal, promise. It is only death which does not stir. John Robinson, at Leyden, said one of the eternal things when he cried: "There is more light yet to break from God's word!"

Let us assume that the Bible is, above all things else, a natural book; that God, in designing it, followed that beautiful "law of parsimony" which is so justly dear to instructed

human minds. Let us suppose that he chose the orderly form of communication in preference to the extraordinary, for reasons which appeal to our own intellectual standards; that he selected natural illustrations of his purpose when he could, and fell back upon the supernatural only when he must; that it is incumbent upon us to bring to this book exactly the same qualities, as readers, which we should to any other important work; that it will bear the same, that it deserves the same, and demands the same; and that if these qualities are of the clearest mental and purest moral type, the book may stand or fall by their sentence, and ought to. I know of no other assumption which can fit a mind to approach a work presenting the claims of this. Precisely in proportion to the greatness of a call upon our credulity must we cultivate the impartial and dispassionate faculties upon whose healthfulness and energy the entire value of our conclusions rests. The church has often suffered herself to forget this simple law.

If the Bible is a natural book, it must be subject to natural rules of interpretation. If, as we noticed at the outset, it prove a sharp

challenge to the human intellect, this argues nothing against its demands, but is rather so far in their favor.

It is not true, as we are in the habit of saying lightly, that all great things are simple. It is true that all really great things can be understood, but there is the grandeur of complexity as well as of simplicity. The arts make this very clear. Music has food for all kinds of human hunger. She never gives a stone for bread, though to the most earthy of natures. It is impossible to observe the faces in a great audience, listening to great music, without an awed sense of a power so diverse as to be almost divine. So the Bible is at once simple and complex: sufficiently intelligible to the untaught; sufficiently daunting to the thinker — who ought, therefore, the more to respect it. It has been compared to a stream, so deep that an elephant can swim in it; so shallow that a lamb could wade across it.

So science, again, dares her disciple on by difficulty. "Is it much for me," said Kepler, "that men should not accept my discovery? When the Almighty waited six thousand years for one to see what he had made, I may

surely wait two hundred for one to understand what I have seen."

In all other forms of revelation, the more closely organized the material, the better instructed minds like it. One of the greatest of contemporaneous philosophers has taught us that development proceeds from the indefinite to the definite, and from simplicity to complexity. Why make an exception of Biblical revelation? Why expect to eliminate from it all elements of perplexity, and all conditions of toiling attention? Why even all possibility of misapprehension? Or why except it from that lower law, as common as it is unflattering to human nature, which leads us to admit that, the more deeply a thing must be sought, the better it is prized?

Suppose we had been given the twenty-third Psalm inscribed by the lightning upon the foreheads of our hills. How soon should we have explained it away as an instance of subconscious cerebration? If the soul once dearer to us than our own had returned from the dead to whisper, "Thou shalt not," in some convulsive moral emergency, would it have always found a listener? Alas, would it have always had a welcome?

I think it is possible for us to conceive that it may not be an easy matter for the Almighty to gain a hearing in a human heart, and to understand that any method of communication must have its disadvantages.

That none can be perfect when he has to deal with such imperfect material, is a foregone conclusion. Out of a disabled organ, what master brings the absolute chord?

It is easier to say what the present educated views of inspiration and interpretation are *not*, than what they are. An unclerical writer who should attempt strictly to define the preponderant belief of the church to-day upon a matter so delicate as the nature of Revelation would have a thankless and a useless task.

The curse of all transitional times is upon us: no man represents such a period; none can fitly record it till it is past.

A few things, however, it is possible, with misrepresentation of none, and justice to all, to observe. Progressive Christian scholarship no longer believes in what was called verbal inspiration. We are not taught that the Bible, as a product of inspiration, is a book whose language was originated, corrected, and

revised by the divine Author; or, as Webster gives it, "in which the very words and forms of expression of the divine message are communicated to the inspired author."

No truly educated preacher teaches that the awful God, in such a sense, wrote the Song of Solomon. We do not hold that the Almighty troubled himself about the cloak that Paul forgot at Troas. No exegete calls the All-wise Being to account for the discrepancies between Matthew and John. The theory that the mind of God peremptorily dictated the composition of the Bible, in all its minutiæ, as the mind of Shakespeare permeated Hamlet, and the hand of Shakespeare directed it, is a theory already gone with the incredible nonsense known as the doctrine of imputed sin, which would have held you or me responsible for the guilt of Eden.

These things are so well understood by intelligent believers, that any skeptical writer who asserts the contrary foredooms himself to a fine dilemma: he carries upon the face of his assertion proof of an ignorance which unfits him to discuss the subject, or else of a moral obliquity in the representation of facts for

which the courtesies of controversy have no permissible name. He either does not know the true, or he circulates the false.

It may be said once again that the most modern Christian scholarship — and, in saying this, I mean even evangelical scholarship — no longer contentedly accepts what is known as plenary inspiration. Plenary inspiration I understand to be the theory that the mind of God, while not dictating the language of the canonical writers, yet exercised a compelling and pervading influence upon them as to motive, matter, and manner ; that they were the instruments of his thought, as the keys are of the musician's thought, and that the whole of the Bible, from the Pentateuch to the Apocalypse, is in this sense inspired — the immediate work of the divine Author. Worcester's definition is, " That kind of inspiration which excludes all mixture of error." Professor Parks's theory of inspiration keenly defines it as " such an influence over the writers of the Bible that all their teachings which have a religious character are trustworthy."

One distinguished English clergyman, indeed, is quoted as saying : " Each book [of the

Bible] is unique, a solitary miracle of its class in human history." To this an American philosopher in sympathy with what are called the orthodox bodies of believers replies: "These are the assertions of men concerning the Scriptures rather than the assertions of the Scriptures concerning themselves."

It would be easy to cite quotations in harmony with this spirit, but our limits will be crowded without them. It is mainly important, for our purpose here, to understand that the Christianity of to-day is not founded upon imbecile liberalism, or hysteric emotionalism, or defunct theology. We are no longer dealing with a stage of religious culture capable of the pious lottery known as sortilege, whereby the accidental turning of a leaf in the Bible might decide the fate of a life, or of an army. Nor have we to do with the advance of spiritual enlightenment which could lead a father to baptize his baby: "He-that-believeth-not-on-Jesus-Christ-shall-be-damned." Nor with a theory of Biblical interpretation formulated in a theology which could require a girl to declare herself willing to be sent to hell if it were the will of God.

To attack a man for the faith of his great-grandfather is only next to ascribing to him the sin of Adam, and ranks the rationalist among the barbarians at whom he sneers.

There is something pathetic in the persistence with which unbelievers of a certain type fire away at buried creeds. It is like a cannonade in a cemetery. Who is hit? Count your bleeding ghosts. Seek not the living among the dead. About face, if you would find a breathing foe!

Intelligent Christians to-day no more suppose that babies go to hell than Strauss did. A growing proportion of such Christians do not believe that the Bible teaches the doctrine of an eternal hell at all. Instructed believers no more think that the majority of the human race are damned than Theodore Parker thought it. Even the representative theologian of the old-school orthodox faith in this country taught in his class-room that the majority of men are saved. The representative theologian of the new school is accustomed, before his students, to compare the number of the lost to the number of the saved as the inmates of our prisons to the population outside

of them. The modern Christian pulpit does not teach that heathen who never heard of Christ cannot be saved. The Christian parish does not learn that faith without character ever carried one single soul to heaven. We do not hold that hell is a lake of material fire. We do not hold that we are unable to do right when we wish to. Few of us think that God willfully foreordained some of his children to endless torture and some to endless peace, and that we cannot help ourselves, but must do as we were predestined to do, and abide the consequences and bless him for it. We do not believe that saints in heaven are happier for the sight of devils in hell. We do not believe that God gets angry. We do not believe that Christ died to satisfy the "vengeance" of his loving Father and ours. We do not believe that there is nothing good and beautiful and true in unconverted human nature. We do not believe that there may not be virtue in very bad people. We do not believe that the merciful and marked growth of character, to which the church has given the name of regeneration, must of necessity take the form of a spiritual convulsion and jerk itself under the

methods of a revival, or the iron limits of a creed. We do not believe that the Almighty is ignorant of the laws of heredity, or that he overlooks the pressure of circumstance on human character. We do not believe that he ever created a soul, the least, the lowest, the most denied, the most sorely bestead by life, and pushed it aside as nature and the modern philosopher do, as an unfit survivor, beneath his careful respect and personal tenderness. We do not believe that he does not love poor wretches better than we do. We do not believe that he will not treat them better than we should. We do not believe, and our scholars do not teach us that our Bible requires us to believe these things.

Neither do we believe that God made the world in six days of twenty-four hours each; that Moses may not have absorbed a great deal of Egyptian culture; nor that the early Jews were not barbarians who acted and were treated accordingly; nor that David and Solomon were ideal modern Christians; nor that Matthew and Luke were skilled as genealogists; nor that the substance of the Golden Rule had never been taught before Christ

taught it; nor that Gautama, and Mohammed, and Confucius did not say a great deal that was true. Nor do we assert that Moses and Paul knew as much science as Herbert Spencer; we simply suggest, let me say in passing, that the Omniscient may.

Though at the risk of being met by certain of my fellow-Christians with the historic reply of Priscilla to John Alden, I think I have not ventured too much in saying that, whatever else the Scriptures mean or give to modern belief, these are among the things which they do *not* reveal.

Many of the dogmas attributed to us exist now only upon the lips or the pages of our opponents. Our young people are familiar with them chiefly in skeptical literature.

Our educated pulpit does not teach them, our pews do not demand them, our press does not circulate them, our scholars smile at them, our saints have outgrown them. Our exploded theories provide occupation still for anxious and aimless infidels of a certain sort, but Christian scholarship must pass them with the silence which is the only practicable reply of any science to any charlatanism.

Where is the Christian apologist who taunts Science with her abandoned outposts? Who accuses her because George Washington was bled to death? Who denounces her because no physician in Europe over the age of forty accepted Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood? Yet such jeers were on a level with the hue and cry to which scholars like Tischendorf, or Robertson Smith, or Bishop Lightfoot are expected to give chase.

Let us remember that systematic religious belief is a science, as well as botany or physiology; like other sciences, subject to human mistake, correction, and slow development; that Revelation has no more done revealing than the cell-theory, or the theory of spontaneously moving plants; and that we are to regard the Bible, not as a splendidly wrought sarcophagus, but as the bed of a deep and magnificent ocean, wherein is hid treasure that the life of a man, or a race, may dive for and not exhaust.

Bearing this clearly in mind, the first thing which we observe about the Bible is that it is a human history, written by men, and for men, and to be judged by human standards.

Whatever God has to do with it is for us a matter of inference, not of assumption. Whatever be the supernatural element in it, we are to decide as a result, not as a condition, of our study of the book. We are not to bring to this study an *a priori* conviction that the whale did, any more than that he did not, swallow Jonah.

All that any believer in the Bible has a right to ask, or needs to ask, is that it should be subjected to the same historical laws which govern other books. If historical science should do away with the personality of Adam, — what then? The believer should be the last to insist upon it for the truth's sake; the reality of Revelation is not affected by the surrender of this or that trifling detail or theory; it would be ruined by an evasion of truth. If the Bible cannot stand the same tests with other histories, we want to know it, and we want to be the first to know it.

It is the belief of careful Christian scholarship, as it is the concession of the fairest skeptical learning, that the book stands the test. Renan says of the Gospels: "All, in my judgment, date back to the first century, and

they are substantially by the authors to whom they are attributed."

We have a human history of at least equal claims with others; with, at all events, no more than their share of errors, inconsistencies, and difficulties; to be handled with the same critical skill and honor as Josephus and Xenophon and Grote; and was it not Lessing who said, "If Livy and Dionysius and Polybius and Tacitus are so candidly and liberally treated that we do not stretch them on the rack for a syllable, why should not Matthew and Mark and Luke and John be treated as well"?

We shall not, however, quarrel with him who demands that the Scriptures be handled with greater critical skill than other histories; their claims are greater, and may require it; but we insist that, for the same reason, the intellectual *and* moral candor of the critic shall be guarded in proportion to the size of the subject and the cause at stake. No human history has received and endured the critical strain which has been brought to bear upon the Christian Scriptures. A German scholar once wrote a keen little book, in which he ap-

plied to the personality of Martin Luther the same kinds of historical methods which have been exercised upon that of Christ, thereby proving the general untrustworthiness of the fact of Luther. Another skillful writer has, by a similar treatment, shown, with marked effect, that Cæsar was never assassinated. Whateley's application of this principle to Napoleon is a familiar instance in the same direction.

Whatever Revelation reveals, then, it cannot be too clearly emphasized that it reveals by sifting through the hard, fine sieve of human history. The natural way God chose, and chose it in this most natural form. We have to deal with the records of an ancient people; with their remoteness and barbarism, their politics, progress, and decline; with their superstitions and faith, their virtues and vices, their pretensions and claims; and, further, with whatever moral or spiritual objects the internal evidence of the Book may offer as sufficient reasons for the selection of this particular people for the position of extraordinary importance which their Scriptures have given them in the world's thought.

The Bible reveals once more, in a degree

unequaled by any human production, a power of adaptation to human consciousness. "The Bible *finds* me," said Coleridge, "as nothing else does." Assuming that God had preferred the literary method and had chosen a collection of Hebrew chronicles, poems, and letters as the medium of communicating to men something of value which Nature had not expressed, it would be expected that he would appeal, so far as his media permitted, to that which underlies all philosophy and defies all dogmatism. "There is a point of view beyond the sphere of philosophy," says Goethe, "namely, that of common sense." There are a few things about ourselves which we *know;* to these the Bible addresses itself with a subtlety and a force which, to be sure, taken by themselves, it is not necessary to call supernatural, but which certainly transcend anything which we have yet experienced in other literary influences.

Men have misery, an uneasy conscience, disenchantment with life, reluctance to death, desire for eternal existence, and isolation of the soul. We do not turn to our Dante for such a plain, old-fashioned thing as comfort;

Goethe has no forgiveness to offer a stained nature shuddering and cowering before itself; Homer lends few illusions to the unconfessed emptiness of our days; Virgil does not draw the sting from the fang of our last hours; Shakespeare cannot promise us immortality, nor draw near to the inner solitude in which all men walk, but the sensitive perish.

Great grief and great guilt drive mankind where they can get something greater. Strong fear and strong hope hold us where we can find something stronger. Sin and suffering are the deepest facts of life. Real emotions are a keen touchstone to the real. The common crises, the plebeian forces, the plain, universal fates and chances, test our prophets and ourselves.

"Though I am a Hellene at heart," confessed the invalid Heine, "the book has not only well entertained me, but also deeply edified me. What a book! . . . The whole drama of humanity (is) in this book. It is the book of books — Biblia."

"Need you ask?" said the dying Scott, when requested to name the book which he would have read. "Need you ask? There is but one."

Quarrel with it as we may, doubt it as we often must, perplexed by it as we shall always be, criticise it as we dare, neglect it as we do, the fact remains, and remains one of august significance, that, in those emergencies of life which are fathoms deep below all intellectual querulousness or self-delusion, the Bible grasps us as the very hand of God might do, if we could find in this fact alone sufficient proof that the hand of God is in it.

We have our infectious as well as our incommunicable doubts. Unbelief is subject to fashions. The scientific pose is so clearly *à la mode*, it would seem strange that it has overlooked in the Bible by far the most important support which can be found for the theories which teach us to believe in the evolution of the race.

Revelation reveals the only clear basis of hope there is that the world can ever become what unbelieving science claims that it will.

Our modern dream of humanity is nothing else than Christianity in a mask domino. The altruism of the prevailing philosophy owes its existence to the principles taught by Jesus, and its influence to the power of his individ-

uality upon the world. What is that audacious fantasy known as the "invention of immortality" but a cheap parody on the splendid Biblical promise of a life hereafter?

Revelation contains the only true democracy. Respect for the despised may be said to have originated with Christ. He first reduced the capricious and inefficient impulses of human sympathy to a permanent force. He taught the inexorable demands of poverty upon possession. He wrought havoc with the criminalities of selfish social ease. He gave challenge to the sloth and the slumber of human fellowship. He preached religious freedom and rebuked superstition.

The deference of strength to weakness, the patience of wisdom with folly, the tenderness of integrity to error, the claims of suffering upon joy, the right of the individual to his own God, were never powerfully formulated and practically illustrated in the same individual until he formulated and illustrated them. The so-called "religion of humanity" is the most amazing theft that the history of philosophy has known. It has stolen from the lips of the Carpenter's Son the principles of

human progress, over which a little knot of scholars and scoffers are grouped to-day, with the expression of those who discover the secret of existence. These principles, and these alone, present the only possible chance for the development of the race from its existing crudeness to the beautiful finish of which materialist and believer dream. The theories of the New Testament contain the seeds of the highest because the broadest culture. They respect the people. They build our hospitals, our asylums, our Magdalen homes, our public schools, the scholarships in our great universities; they open the oriental harems to our female physicians, our libraries to day-laborers, our academies to freed slaves, our colleges to women, our republics to their citizens. Blot the philosophy of the Nazarene out of the world, and these things go with it. This philosophy, and this alone, places that importance on the individual which makes personal growth possible upon any such scale as to become general development.

Jesus Christ taught the value of the unit; he gave us this factor in social statics. He represented the enfranchisement of faith; he

gave this basis to our spiritual science. Strive as we would, we can no more outgrow our debt to him as a social reformer, or the chief apostle of religious freedom, than the wine can disallow its own grapes, or the rainbow ignore the prism. "Let mental culture go on advancing," admitted Goethe, "let the natural sciences go on gaining in depth and breadth, and the human mind expand as it may, it will never go beyond the elevation and moral culture of Christianity as it glistens and shines forth in the Gospel!"

The remarkable conformity of the Scriptures to personal consciousness and to universal history is an important argument in favor of the reality of the Biblical claims, but does not seem to be a final one. Let it meet the individual or the general needs with whatever force or subtlety, the demands of this Book are so tremendous, if false they are so preposterous, that it ought to be subjected to every test of intellect and conscience that we can bring to bear upon it.

If we can find anything else professing to be a revelation from God which is less perplexing, more simple, more reasonable, we

should be bound to drop this. "Give me a better book, and I will," was the profound reply of a Christian who was asked to surrender the Bible.

Candid unbelievers readily acknowledge the superiority of the Christian to all other Scriptures. Uncandid ones admit the same by the virulence and persistence of their defiance to the Bible.

"There is no recognition in the Koran of human brotherhood." Many orientalists claim that Buddhism gives us no personal god. The Edda, and the Zend Avesta, and the Vedas have too many gods. The Sacred Books of Confucius offer little or no hope of immortality. It is not too much to say that, on the whole, and to the best of our knowledge and belief, tested by that consensus of the intelligent and devout which alone is competent to pass judgment upon a question in which the spiritual faculties as well as the reasoning must be qualified jurors, our Bible reveals the best explanation we have of the phenomena of life.

It is a mysterious one, it is an imperfect one, it is a half-developed one, but it is the

best we have. It is the best we have, because it is the most humane; therefore, in so far, the most divine. It is the most humane and the most divine because it reveals the relation of Jesus Christ to the problem of existence.

To practical people of instructed intelligence, but not of the theological or metaphysical temperaments which will amuse themselves with the casuistries of the thing to the end of human leisure, it seems to me that the whole matter resolves itself into something like this:

We are here, we know not how or why. We are in a world of certain misery and uncertain pleasure. Life is a dark marvel. Death is a blind leap. The future is silent. God is a mystery. Nature is terrible. Why are we thrust, the pawns in an awful game? Why, why were we tossed, the weeds on a fathomless sea? What did the Creator of the earth mean by so seemingly cruel a waste of human sensitiveness and force? Who can find him reasons for an apparently merciless venture at world-making? Here comes calmly upon our bluster and battle a Book whose his-

tory is so singular that its unique pretensions scarcely excite our surprise, however they influence our credulity.

It assumes to declare to us the existence of a wise and affectionate God, whose children we are, and whose purposes to us it partially explains. It presumes to treat us as immortal souls. It dares to promise us eternal life. It delights to offer us that satisfaction of body, mind, and spirit known as heaven. It does not shrink from foretelling the moral consequences of evil in this or any world. It allures us to purity. It would comfort us in sorrow. It would save us from despair. It would stimulate confidence in the Author of life, and our trust in that sequel to it which follows death. It is true that this book fails to tell us why God made the world at all. It is as silent as reason, it is as dumb as the stars, upon this tremendous question. It is, possibly, one of the objects of our existence to learn that we are too small to ask a question of this size; that divine motives are not material for human grasp, like fossils, or mollusks, or typhoid fever. However that may be, the Bible meets us squarely upon the deepest and the highest

question which the finite intellect has the right to ask: What, having made us at all, is God's moral attitude toward us? When he thrust into space this quivering ball of pain and error, did he mean well enough by it to justify the deed?

Profounder than all our philosophy, wiser than all our protest, comes the sublime and solitary answer: "*He so loved the world that he gave his only Son.*"

This magnificent reply, which theology has distorted out of its grand and simple proportions, to which science has refused its supreme reasonableness, the true human heart and the clear human head have accepted. The contortions of faith and the malice of doubt have almost equally united to shake the hold of this great re-assurance upon the world. The world will have it in spite of both. The world will have it, because it is the best it can get; and by all the iron laws of common sense it will keep the best till God or man can offer it something better.

The Bible, then, we say, is a mysterious book; as yet possibly a misunderstood, certainly an ill-understood one; it has been as

much abused as used; it has cloaked amazing error and shielded incredible crime; it has been the object of idolatrous worship and of infernal hate; it has aroused almost all the passions of humanity. The crude, emotional stages of the world's life have spent themselves upon it, like weather on a rock. Now, as we approach the ages of disciplined thought and deepened spiritual forces, the form of the conflict will change only as much as it must intensify.

Far be it from me to involve any other believer in an individual conviction, or to claim to represent the shifting and various phases of faith in the Christian church to-day, by a personal theory of inspiration, when I say that the Bible of the future must be interpreted chiefly as a biography.

The day may come when our views of the divine purpose, as exemplified in the Old Testament, will receive even more modification than they have already done, and that is very great.

"There is no such reverential use of the truth as a bold use of it," finely says President Bascom. "No other use implies the same confidence in it."

The time may be at hand, not when all element of the supernatural shall be eliminated from a work which, so far as we can now see, must retain a measure of it as a countersign of its sacred and exceptional errand, but when the proportions of that element shall be perceptibly decreased. If the Jewish Scriptures should come to be regarded, mainly, as the religious and political records of a people whose national importance the events of the New Testament, and these alone, explain; if we find ourselves led to subject their legends and miracles to the same intelligent tests by which we have already tried their cosmogony and chronology, and if the one should share in large measure the same fate that has overtaken the other; though Eden were an allegory, and though God never told Abraham to kill Isaac, and though we were obliged to consider it doubtful whether Samson slew a thousand men with the jaw-bone of an ass, the value of the Bible would be no more infringed than the glory of the moon is affected by the "discouraging condition" of lunar theories, concerning which a scientific student tells us that her "actual place in the heavens is now

so different from her calculated place that a sailor would be misled by it, as to his longitude, five miles."

If, indeed, we come at length to prize the Old Testament, — for its matchless devotional literature, to be sure, its august historic associations and profound ministry to certain forms of human need, but mainly because it represents the genealogical stage of that great Memoir whose central Figure is the hope of the world, — the power of the Bible will no more be lost than the color of the rose was lost by the discovery of the metamorphosis of plants. That majestic Figure remains, and the details of its history advance with increasing literary and moral effect, through the precious pages of the New Testament, to their climax. The Gospels tell the story and report the instruction of Christ. The Epistles formulate his theology. The Apocalypse is a vision of the final mystery to which all fact and all faith are tending — a vision seen by the soul that he loved best, and that may have, must have, absorbed most of the miracle of his nature.

The biography marches on, with splendid

disregard of all petty criticisms, to its great historical and ethical ends. God used such material as he had. He seems to have cared chiefly to select men who would not lie, and trusted the necessary imperfections of such a work, performed by such instruments as he could get, to the good sense of mankind.

One might almost say that it does not seem to have occurred to the great Compiler of these scattered records that the world would ever question the main purpose or use of the Bible, because the Jews killed their captives or Matthew made a mistake in a genealogical table! How small, beside the loftiness of the divine plan which overrode the human grouping of these humanly written records, shows the peevish spirit which demands that he weed the human out of them, and because he did not dares him to prove that he had anything to do with them at all!

Whatever the future of Biblical exegesis may bring forth, it is difficult to see reason for believing that the miracles of the New Testament will ever be entirely "explained away;" though that may be a piece of private conservatism. We have no more right, as has been well sug-

gested, to assume that there can be no miracle, than that there must. The facts, and the facts alone, must make the theory. The scientific basis of thought has taught us as much as this. Let Christianity be too apt a pupil to forget it. The evidential proofs that Jesus possessed supernatural powers seem so far to rest where the other historical proof of the narrative does; and so far both, or neither, are to be accepted. But even supposing that candid and devout scholarship should eventually leave us little of these miraculous incidents except the great fact and symbol of the Resurrection, it is certain that we should not lose our Bible with them. We should lose nothing unless we lost the Christ. *He* is the miracle. Revelation reveals him. He is the message of God to man. Through him is the divine law offered to human obedience. By him all that it has pleased the Ruler of the world to explain of his moral government is expressed. Jesus Christ *is* Revelation, and Revelation is Jesus Christ.

The famous and familiar words of Lecky come with more force to us, just here, than any Christian estimate of this sacred personality could exert:

"It was reserved for Christianity to present to the world an ideal character which, through all the changes of eighteen centuries, has filled the hearts of men with an impassioned love. . . . It may be truly said that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers, and than all the exhortations of moralists."

What this principle of regeneration means to the race it is impossible for any one not a student of human history ignorantly to describe. What this means to the individual soul it is preposterous for any one not in personal *rapport* with Christ and his teachings ignorantly to decide.

Here we enter a phase of the argument where a certain advance in spiritual culture is clearly essential to discussion; and here those who have, and they who have not, a consciousness of their own spiritual natures, and of the famished needs and disused powers which throb through them, must stand apart.

Revelation reveals less science, less dogmatic theology, less miracle, than we used to think, but more of Christ. The Bible is a

frame of which he is the picture. We have no right to turn from it till we have received into, and tested by our own, that marvelous and mystic life.

When we have absorbed within ourselves his wide-reaching philosophy, his dazzling personal purity, his organic humanity, his supreme unselfishness, — then, and not till then, shall we have that ethical illumination which will intellectually fit us to deny that the Bible reveals the Science of Life.

IV.

THE STRUGGLE FOR IMMORTALITY.

LIFE is either a problem or a play; which, will be decided by temperament rather than by circumstance. The instinct of the dramatic, the passion to be pleased, are as compulsory in their way as suffering or thought. Superficiality, we must remember, may be as inevitable as sensitiveness. The man who said that for his part he always got away from unhappy people, had either more candor or less tact than most of his sort; but it is a sort that can no more be disregarded in an estimate of the world than any other of the defective classes. The impulse with which we embrace or repulse the higher form of fact, may be the decisive trait that must generalize us in a classification of species at which science has not yet arrived.

Individuality is the one essential fact of

life; its presence, in whatever surplus or wryness, is matter of calculable regard, as its absence is of futile regret. There never was a wiser saying than his who told us that for our faults of exuberance there might be all possible remedies; for our deficiencies — none. A nicer distinction between defects and deficiencies might further refine the illustration.

Who are they who conquer nature, create kingdoms, discover truth, rule society, comfort anguish, and purify evil? It is truism to say: the men and women who have been themselves. Whom do we seek in some famine of the mind? Not him who conforms, who is fractional rather than integral. Or to whom do we turn when our hearts are breaking? Not to the smoothest, but to the strongest personality that is intelligible or available to our own. We all know men who are mental derricks, hoisting everybody within reach. We have all felt people who are moral cyclones, hurling everything out of their track.

Yet force is not of necessity noisy. Love is not boisterous. The atmosphere is not obtrusive. A woman's will may be silent, and may "be done," like Heaven's. "The strong

power called weakness " has its own kingdom. We may be in the clutch of the earthquake, or the slave of a still, small voice. Insistence has many natures ; they are alike only in this : that they insist.

The tendency of individuality is to vigor ; and because to vigor, therefore to duration of life. This seems a very simple thing to say. If it be strictly true and thoroughly believed, it may be seen to have complex results, some of which it will be the object of this paper to consider ; not as truths which can presume to be called new, but rather, by the season of prevailing thought, renewed.

That the trend of individuality is toward force and permanence, we are reminded at every turn. Diffusion is feebleness. Speech weakens feeling. The flood lessens the current. Shallowness produces evaporation. Commonness reduces preciousness. Deep emotions are perpetuated ; mighty love means constancy, and marked hate is incurable. Vigorous characters reproduce themselves ; emphasized characteristics are hereditary ; and so on. The list is practically endless.

In this last connection, we are all more or less

familiar with the work of modern science; a work whose value, as we shall presently see, only begins with its physical aspects, and out of which a higher science has still to be evolved by a discoverer possibly yet unborn.

Our late great apostle of natural science has popularized for us several indispensable terms, in which it is as natural for the mind to think to-day as it was for the child Montaigne to exclaim in Latin when his father fainted. One of these useful words is Selection. The facts of selection — natural, sexual, and unconscious — in the history of man and of the lower organizations, are established for intelligence beyond the right of ignorance to question. These facts and the meaning of the facts are in our primers now. The same may be said of that most happy phrase, the struggle for existence.

"Nothing is easier," says Darwin himself, "than to admit in words the truth of the universal struggle for life, or more difficult — at least I have found it so — than constantly to bear this conclusion in mind. Yet, unless it be thoroughly engraved in the mind, the whole economy of nature . . . will be dimly seen, or quite misunderstood."

The apparently trifling or irrelevant minutiæ crowding the pages which lay bare to the world the curiously interesting processes that go to the creation of a great theory have a special, but not always superficially evident, value in the direction of our thought.

We are told, for instance, that if the multiplication from a single pair of elephants were unchecked by accident or death, in seven hundred and fifty years there would be nineteen million elephants alive. We are reminded that in Paraguay neither cattle, horses, nor dogs run wild, because their infant progeny are destroyed by a certain parasitic fly, which has preëmpted that vague, geographical region. We read that heart's-ease and red clover would disappear from England if humble-bees were exterminated there. Or we hear of the "walking-stick insect," which, that it may protect itself from danger, is made to resemble a "walking-stick closely overgrown with moss." Or again, we are asked to believe that the ball-and-socket decorations on the wing-feathers of the Argus pheasant are æsthetically appreciated by the female during courtship. Or our attention is concentrated upon the fact

that among the Kalmucks, who practice the custom of bridal races (the bride having a fair start), "no instance occurs of a girl being caught unless she has a partiality for the pursuer." Or we are told that if human reproduction were not offset by mortality, there would not, in a thousand years, be standing-room upon the earth for the progeny of man. Again, we are reminded that the Holy Inquisition killed off the bravest, freest, and most independent minds of its time, and thus appreciably depleted Europe of her best material. Or it is suggested that the culture of Greece and the empire of Rome seem to have their chief purpose and value as subsidiaries "to the great stream of Anglo-Saxon emigration to the West." Or we are asked if the idea of a universal and beneficent Creator be not the result, in the mind of man, of elevation "by long-continued culture."

The connection of these rather burly statements with the spiritual future of mankind is not at first sight apparent; and, to the merely scientific student, may remain obscure. Yet the continuity in such a progression of selected facts is subtle, and the workmanship nice.

From beginning to end, the link within the link is the force of individuality. The relation of individuality to spirituality completes the chain which, in view of that relation, it is here our purpose to examine.

Man is born to fight for his life. This is the upshot of the new wisdom. (After all it is rather an old wisdom.) He has been developed from ancestral, inferior organizations which, in turn, have had to fight for their lives. All the great and little facts of history converge to this truth. Conflict with the elements has mown down non-combatants. The attraction between the sexes has served as the great appreciator of personal values. Death, like "gray-haired Saturn, quiet as a stone," has stood guard against the event of the world's becoming uninhabitable from excess of life. Climate, disease, accident, anguish, love, war, superstition, even civilization itself, have each served their turn in the awful battle. All are but so many foes to the new-born babe. Carlyle put one view of the truth in his rough way when he said that the ultimate question between any two human beings is: "Can I kill thee? or, canst thou kill me?"

We rate by thousands of years the age of the great design carved in the Cambodian temple, which represents a wheel of inchoate, writhing forms — serpents, dragons, monkeys, and men — revolving in a conflict vast and mysterious, and typifying "The Struggle of Natural Life toward the Ideal and Spiritual." Existence is a challenge. Circumstance is the gauntlet. Success is victory, and failure is defeat. Death is, or may be, escape.

It will be seen that to say all this is to say simply that the struggle for existence is decided by the ratio of individuality to the odds. Whether we have to do with the duels of mastodons in a prehistoric forest, or the conflict of an Esquimau with the elements, or the broken heart of Sappho, or the dying bed of Keats; whether we are dealing with the extermination of a tribe of Kaffirs, or the decline of an over-civilized empire, or the fall of an outlawed religion, the radical elements of the question are the same. Personality is power. Behind every great success is an individual. There is the absence or the destruction of one in every great defeat. Who con-

quers? The integer. Who fails? The fraction.

It should be remembered, of course, that individuality may be subtle or strong, and that conquest may be apparent or real. Success may be a matter of muscle or of imagination. Defeat may come from brain or brawn. There is victory of the digestion and failure of the temper. There is failure of the nerves and victory of the spirit. There is weakness of the conscience and power of the will. There is success in the incidental and temporary, and there is failure in the essential and permanent. There is deification of the body and insult to the soul. There is ruin of the body and construction of the soul. An untimely fit of hysteria may cost a woman the intellectual ambition of all her days. A man with the prosperities of life in his hand may lose, by a rude word or a selfish deed, the heart of the woman who would have been worth to him the world and the glory thereof. Of Napoleon, it has been said by a recent historian that he was a threefold being, of active intellect, imperious will, and deficient moral sense; and, from the hollow of that deficiency,

history measures his surplus and his success. Christ was called a failure by his contemporaries.

It needs no historian to remind us that individuality is, in fact, the result of a conflict between widely differing and by no means necessarily obvious agencies — the effect of counteraction between the evident and the suggested, or between the seen and the unseen.

It needs no prophet to tell us that this counteraction is to become more complicated as it is overtaken by civilization; that the proportion of the obvious to the latent is likely to be lessened; that the relativity of the evident to the suggested will undergo change; and that the ratio of the seen to the unseen may be expected to suffer mathematical transference.

This is to say, in brief, that, for a man to become a force, is to be one among diversely many, or one through harmoniously many things. And, that to become a force in the future, is probably to be a much less simple matter than it is now, or has ever been. An individual, in fact, represents not only a huge amount of fighting capacity, but must represent an increasing amount of tactical ability.

A powerful personality may be said to be what the Hahnemannians call "a complex of symptoms."

The love of life is one of the elements of life; we might say that it is what physiologists call one of the "proximate principles" of life. It is not enough merely to say that the love of life is normal — it *is* life. The most exhausted victim of existence will admit that it is his exhaustion which ails him. Bulwer says somewhere that there is a want more fierce than the want of food, more terrible than the want of sleep; it is "the want to die." The world-weariness which is so incontestable a feature of our age was foretold long ago by an ancient Persian proverb, which ran: "When men, in passing by the newly made grave, shall say, 'Would God I were there!' the end of the world is nigh."

But even suicide in no sense intrudes upon the main truth, simple as a primary color, and organic as the action of the heart; — that to be alive is to wish to live. He who desires death has already begun to die. He who reaches the point of encroaching upon death

is already virtually dead. Such encroachment is simply a form of the universal fact. The passion for self-destruction is but one means of accomplishing dissolution. One man has typhus fever; one cuts his throat; one has consumption; another has suicide. Each is a disease. The incipient cough that nobody notices, and the first toying with the cocked pistol that nobody knows, may be, for philosophical purposes, the same thing. This is not the place to discuss the moral aspects of suicide, of which I have here nothing to say.

The undeniable extension of self-destruction, as tabulated by the best statisticians of the subject to-day, only substantiates the premise in a high sense. It is reluctantly admitted by some of the bleakest materialists among these statisticians that one of the prevailing causes of the increase of suicide is the increase of religious unbelief. This is, perhaps, the subtlest illustration yet in hand of our point — setting quite aside its use in a didactic sense.

The doomed being who anticipates death everlasting, as his part and lot in the problem of universal suffering, stretches forth his

hand to clutch his portion, and is, in effect, already dead, because he is to die. Death sets in with the passion for death. Life implies the love of life. Other things being equal, the healthy body craves life. Other things being equal, the healthy soul demands life. It may be said that none of us are ever actually beaten in the battle of existence except by untimely death, by madness, or by what it is now a little old-fashioned to call sin.

The desire for eternal life is a very old human preference. It must be also admitted to be a very strong one. It is impossible here to do more than recall the existence of the immense mass of scholarship and sentiment, faith and dogmatism, wisdom and folly, which have been wreaked upon the sole aspect of the subject that raises the question whether belief in the future life is intuitive in the mind of man.

This paper does not presume to enter upon that venerable and tremendous discussion, but would suggest its huge proportions in the history of thought as significant far beyond the reach of mere argument. However we come

by the wish to live forever, the fact seems to be that most of us have it. Whatever were the private views of the Cave-men, or even the current of thought in the Jewish theocracy upon this point, it seems to be true, so far as the evidential testimony is in, that the race has desired, if not expected, continuance after death.

This fact alone would not prove that we should get what we desire; but it is certainly not a good reason for showing why we should miss it. To say that no subject whatever has so deeply stimulated the human mind as that of a life to come is not to overstate the case. The agitations of love and the consequences of death have been the two fundamental objects of interest in this world; and of these twin princes, the gentler has yielded the crown to the sterner brother. Where is the lover whose ardor would not be chilled by an apparition or an earthquake?

A glance at the literature of eschatology, as represented in the catalogues of even our secular and popular libraries, astonishes one who looks at them for the first time. A celebrated publisher once said that to put the

word Heaven into the title of a book was enough to insure the sale of it. I remember to have heard one of the most philosophical of men — the least impetuous either in thought or speech, and one of the best trained in intellect and character — say that he would prefer any life, even that of a supposable world of woe, to annihilation. A man who has acquired the habit of living is loath to suspend it. His custom has become his appetite ; it seems to him even to have become his right.

Christian philosophy has a certain respectable position among systems of thought. As a system, it has somewhat emphatic bearings upon the idea which we are pursuing.

It is the great point, so to speak, of the Christian religion, that it conforms vigorously to the vigorous love of existence in the existing. It meets this high instinct on lofty ground ; it treats it with the respect due any such elemental impulse ; it deals not with the dream, but the deed ; it offers no fantasy, but a promise ; it plunges us in no reverie, but holds us to an assurance ; and mocks us not with myths, but controls us with facts.

"God," it has been well said, by a great metaphysician, "is chiefly of interest to us in so far as he is the condition of our immortality." Recognizing this truth, Christian philosophy squarely offers duration of life to the individual.

Such an offer, it will be said, has been made before. True, and happily true. Were this not so, had the race existed six thousand years — or sixty — more or less, with no more hope of perpetuity after death than so many kangaroos, the originality of Christianity might have been her practical destruction, and that which has been accepted as an inspiration might have been set aside as an "ism." It may be claimed, however, that the Christian form of the offer of immortality is, up to this time, the most reasonable which has been presented in the history of religion; that it is the most explicit, the most logical, the most finished; in short, that it is a progression from other and lower phases of the same thing, and in so far entitled to the respect due to any highly advanced organization.

Passing the outworn superstitions, whether of savagery or civilization, and attending to

those forms of belief which are fashionable to-day, it will not be disputed that Christianity is the only one which advances consistent hope of personal immortality. The vagueness and vagary of Buddhism upon this doctrine are too well known to need explanation here. The "Dream-religion" may, or may not, make you a man or a cloud, at the thither side of death; it is not clear whether one shall be an angel or an atom. Much æsthetico-religious sensibility which luxuriates over the "Light of Asia," would be cured by a sound acquaintance with the Suttas or Dhammapadas in a standard translation. "Never," says Max Müller, "had a scheme of salvation been put forth . . . so independent of, so even antagonistic to the belief in a soul, the belief in God, and the hope of a future life."

Shall we ask Agnosticism for her eternal hope? Hollow is her evasive reply! Such dreary elusion is not a new one, at best, in the history of belief. "When," says Müller again, "after many centuries of thought, a pantheistic or monotheistic unity has been evolved out of the chaos of polytheism . . . there has always arisen, at last, a school to whom theo-

logical discussions have lost their interest, and who have sought for a new solution of the questions to which the theologies have given inconsistent answers, in a new system in which man was to work out here on earth his own salvation." Up to a certain point Agnosticism has, indeed, pilfered from Christianity in the attempt to substitute for a strong and glorious affirmation a weak and pitiful negation. So intense is the love of life in the human soul that even this negation is pathetically snatched. He who has no longer any hope of existence beyond the incident of his own death-bed palliates his condition by prating of posterity; or, he who buries the beloved of his life, standing comfortless at the grave's gap, listens to feeble talk of her continuance in the future of the race.

The Christian religion, in offering duration to the individual, is, as we have said, explicit and logical; but it is also conditional. It is difficult for the mind, reared among the familiar speech with which most of us dispose of this subject, to be alertly aware of the fact that immortality is nowhere proved to be a natural right. Yet such is the fact. Like

suffrage, immortality is not a right, but a privilege. It is not property, but a gift. This gift is offered to you or me upon conditions which we can accept or deny at will. The founder of our religion makes, we may say that he constitutes, the conditions. Everlasting life is, in fact, according to this religion, bestowed by Jesus Christ upon the human soul. The consequence of declining this gift and its conditions would seem to be logically, if not theologically, wrapped in the phrase, "everlasting death." But this opens debatable ground, upon which our paper can do no more than glance.

Theology is not Christianity. The word and the creed are not one and the same. The premise of the master and the conclusion of the priest may diverge through pressure of a hundred inevitable causes.

The writer is no theologian and is not writing to theologians, and is loath to touch upon a point which laymen must treat rather by instinct and judgment than by equipment. Yet the great common sense and heart of the world will have their way with the great common problems. The universal must abide the uni-

versal test. The question whether any portion, large or small, of the human race is to suffer forever is, at least, one which it would seem to be in poor taste to treat flippantly, and poor religion to treat acrimoniously. If there be any question above all others in which people who think as well as feel, or people who feel as well as think, should grant each other large and solemn charity, this is that question.

It is not a matter to be frivolously set aside, either by theological prejudice, or personal preference. It is difficult to suppose that the eternal future of the mass of the human race depends upon the culture of an exegete, or the translation of a Greek word. Whatever may be the truth, or the choice between the chances of the truth, such a choice should be made in a spirit above the reproach of controversial bitterness or pettiness, and "on the height" of a sacred gentleness of soul, wherein "lies repose."

It would be seen by an exegetical study of the subject that it may be at least no unscriptural or unreasonable form of Christian faith which offers immortality — any kind of

immortality — as a gift, on specified conditions, to the individual. To this extent, therefore, Christianity may be called in support of the suggestion to which we find ourselves now clearly directed by the train of thought that we have pursued ; and, in so far, those who are themselves believers in the value of the Christian faith, and tolerant of its differing interpretations of the Bible text, may be inclined to follow us. For those who are not such, the argument stands or falls by itself ; lacking, in that case, a certain emphasis, but not, we trust, without order.

"He that believeth on me," said Jesus Christ, "hath everlasting life." "Immortality," said Emerson, "will come to such as are fit for it. He who would be a great soul in the future must be a great soul now." Both the religious and the philosophical aspects of our thought have their force ; he who accepts either has something ; he who holds both has much. "Blessed be the day," cries the modern Buddhist, "when I shall draw the veil from the face of my beloved. . . . But the veil on the face of my beloved is the dust of this earthly body." "There is a spiritual body,"

asserted the Christian apostle. "I am the resurrection," said his Master.

Now, then, it will be remembered that we have gone over certain ground in this paper, not unfamiliar in itself, but holding, as the writer hopes, some fresh relation to contiguous territory. We have traced the nature and effects of personality as a factor in power. We have noticed that the tendency of individuality is to vigor, and because to vigor, therefore to duration of life. We have remembered that modern science has given us proof, so overwhelming as to partake of the nature of revelation, of a truth so familiar that we had all but overlooked it — the truth that man, to the most solemn ends, is born to fight for his life. We have recollected that the struggle for existence is decided by the ratio of individuality to the odds; that individuality may be subtle or strong; that victory may be real or apparent; that individuality is likely to become, with the progress of civilization, a more complex fact, in which the relation between the seen and the unseen may change its present proportions. We have called to mind, also, that the love of life is

one of the elements of life, and that death sets in with the passion, whether real or apparent, for death. We have remembered that the desire for eternal, and therefore unseen, life is an important human impulse; and we have alluded to the contributions of Christian philosophy toward the love of eternal life especially as framed in the theory of conditional immortality. We have further suggested that the Christian offer of immortality is a progression from lower phases of the same thing, and entitled to the respect due to any highly advanced organization.

Does it not remain to be said that strength of individuality is probably proportional to the strife for eternal existence? Tremendous is the truth, if this be true. A man may be negligent of his own noblest nature if he deem himself the victim of a blind chance, or a relentless tyrant, or even an arbitrary governor. He must start, if he be a man, to a view of life and time which puts him on his mettle before both. The appeal to self-respect, in such a view, is as powerful as self-respect can bear. Suppose that this view be true. Sup-

pose that the struggle for existence which begins with the Protozoa, or the Promammalia, and advances[1] to Aristotle or Darwin, has become nothing more nor less than a struggle for immortality.

Suppose that the challenge is thus broadly thrown down to you, or me, or Newton, or the Jukes family. Live or die! It is your own affair. You have the conditions and the chances. Accept or decline. No gods, pagan or Christian, shall interfere to compel you. Your personality has sacred and awful rights. You are caught in the machinery of inextricable law. Love is a part of that law; but both love and law must take the material that you give them. Of what stuff are you made? Abide the test. It is ours to ask. Are you a man or a molecule? Are you a soul or a cell? It is yours to decide. Give us the proof.

Truth has endless corridors by which to approach conviction, and one can see in such a

[1] We say advances. We cannot say ends; for we have no evolutionist yet returned from the silence of apparent end to classify whatever possible superior form of being may exist beyond reach of our microscope or telescope.

view as this, a marked appeal to certain types of nature which seem to be left out of the usual religious argument. It is perhaps true that many a person objects to troubling himself with immortality, either as an advantage or a disadvantage, when his attention is concentrated exclusively upon the fact that eternal life involves definite moral conditions. That it should imply, also, certain conditions of a very different sort is quite another matter; that it should touch the intellect, the force, the good sense, or even the simple pluck of a man — this is to be regarded. We may be conquered through our pride, when we cannot be won through our conscience. He who does not find it any longer exciting to be told that he is not good enough to live forever, will scarcely hear without interest that he is not strong enough. Many of us would rather be called bad than weak. It is an arrest to the thoughtfulness of any man but an inferior one to show him reason why he may be in the way of losing an obvious gain through inferiority. Precisely that, such a view of the struggle for immortality as we have suggested would undertake to show.

In proportion to the force and vigor of the individual is the love of life, present and to come. Eternal life should be at least as much a test of power as temporal life. Individuality means the acquisition of life; one rates one's self accordingly. To love life, to strike out for it, to overcome it, to insist on it, is strength. To fail of it is weakness. We do not stay just now to remind you that a pure heart, forgiven sin, consecrated deeds, are the conditions of immortality, and that a given being may miss of it by missing these; we say only that he misses it because there is not enough of him, or because he does not make enough of himself to get it. He of the centrifugal nature, whose mind works from within outward, moving in spirals about moral problems; who finds it easy to doubt accepted truths because of what strikes him repeatedly, at the same point, as the excess of his own originality — he will be reluctant to believe that he may be declining immortality simply because he is not man enough to have it. Yet, metaphysically as physically, the argument holds. He is thrust upon a battle-field, enormous and deadly. As for the bread of the

body, so for the bread of the soul, he fights. As for life, love, success, fame, and the trifles of time, so for eternal hope, and its majestic possibilities, he shall be challenged. Is he a man? Let him show his colors. Is he a soldier? Ask for his scars. Does he hold his ground? Does he shirk, desert, surrender, or fly? Let him look to it. By so much as he is a force, he will keep the field.

Retreat from the great effort of being to secure its own continuity, may have whatever moral aspects; it is at least true that to retreat is to be beaten; that to be beaten is to be weak; and that such weakness may be the last fate which has presented itself as probable to the type of soul most likely to succumb.

For, let us notice, the struggle for immortality is not a simple and obvious affair. The armor and sabre, the powder and shot, are not, in fact, altogether the urgent and the tangible. The blood and dust and mortal cries may not be the apparent, or the audible; and he who is hurled down "unable or to move or die," may give no sign. As with the silent defeats of life, so with its dumb victories. He needs the higher education in the deaf-mute

language of the soul, who would apply his tactics to the estimate; and his is the best martial culture of the spirit which is most conscious of its own unfitness to specialize that estimate. But so much as this it is easy to see: as civilization refines, the intricacy and delicacy of the struggle for existence must refine with it; and, that this is likely to be true of eternal as well as of temporal existence, the course of our argument has already suggested, and now finds itself obliged to emphasize.

The struggle for eternal life is no light matter, like ladies' calisthenics, which exercise only certain muscles. The athletics of the soul are virile; they are impartial; they are not ornamental and fanciful. Development is demanded for use, not for exhibit. Tissue and sinew and blood and bone respond; now this, now the other, urgency on one, relief of the other, pressure here, repose there, strain to-day, rest to-morrow, this faculty aroused, the other lulled, this feat to be performed, that danger scorned, a boy's medal won to-day, and a man's life saved next year; thus the soul, in the hands of the Silent Trainer, grows in frame and fibre. Will we play battle-door

and shuttle-cock for our prizes? Or close and wrestle for them?

We have spoken of the evolution of a higher than the physical, from the physical science which holds so disproportionate, but none the less useful, an influence over the thought of the instructed world to-day. "We are spirits," said one of the coolest of scientific men, a century ago. "We are spirits. That bodies should be lent to us while they can afford us pleasure, assist us in acquiring knowledge, or in doing good to our fellow-creatures, is a kind and benevolent act of God." The practical Franklin showed his keen good sense in this matter-of-fact way of expressing a truth which is too often approached upon the mystical and most difficult side. We are, indeed, spirit; and we may, without hesitation, dispute so much as this with him who begins by saying that we are matter. It cannot be denied that we have at least as good a right to start with the one assertion, as he with the other. "I should never," says Elizabeth Peabody, "teach a child, 'You have a soul,' but, 'You have a body.'"

Let us then call the struggle for immortal-

ity an advanced form of the lower encounter. It is a struggle historic and dramatic, as it is involved and unconcluded. A man cannot fight this fight with part of his nature. It takes the whole of him. A stout fist avails him little without sound thought. He cannot gain the day by his intellect, lest he lose it on the side of his heart. Neither does emotion win without reflection, and hysteria is a poor weapon to substitute for common sense. We find at once, that we have approached herein a problem complex to the edge of mystery. For, there enters into this struggle a strange law of spiritual selection, differing from that governing the conflicts in the lower phases of organization, as fineness differs from momentum, the telephone from a war-cry, or the Flower Charity from the Inquisition.

The conditions of immortality wholly refuse to rest upon the piers which hold the conditions of conquest in the life of time. Brute force ceases now to keep its relative value in this larger contest. There is what may be called a brute force of the mind, of which this is equally and terribly true. Sheer intellect has no greater chance at everlasting life than

sheer muscle. Immortality is not promised by their Creator, to great men. Mere mind holds no passport to eternity. There is no limited express to Paradise for able people. Goethe, for being Goethe, is none the more likely to last forever. Frederica, so far as we can see, stands quite as good, or a better chance.

The law of spiritual selection would seem to be at once severe and delicate. The obscurest mother, transmitting a pure heart to her boys, never having heard of protoplasm, and knowing no philosophy beyond her prayers, may enter into this higher contention with an equipment which the discoverer of the missing link might envy. It is quite conceivable that the soul of a felon might survive the soul of a prince or a priest. The tests of the world fail. Fine causes, and finer sequences, enter the list. Who are we that we should win? What is our standard of success? What the temper of our weapons? We buy and sell, we woo and wed, we gain us a friend, or fame; and the stranger without our gates, or the servant under our feet, may be fighting for a soul's life where we are fooling with it, and may, therefore, be better worth life, and so the more

likely to live. For law is but law, and spiritual law loses nothing of its grip for its gain in quality, and holds us none the less robustly because of a touch so velvet.

Suppose that this view be the true one. Suppose that he who wishes to live indefinitely, or always, is the subject of such law. Suppose that the complete and complex nature — physical, mental, moral, spiritual — becomes, by an ascending scale of strain, the soldier in such a strife. Suppose that the ultimate atom of the permanent individual may prove to be the vigor or the honor of his conscience. Suppose that from this, as, in the physical case, from the cell of the embryo, the life of what we call a soul evolves. Suppose that the development of this spiritual cell-life is, to the requisite extent, under the control of the human will. Suppose that this development is governed by a just, or even a generous relativity to the environment which spiritual science is not yet advanced enough to formulate. Suppose that the grandest work performed by the physical science of our times should prove to be its contribution to such a spiritual science, and that such a spiritual sci-

ence is yet to become a matter of more orderly, more manly, and more nearly universal acceptance, than any form of religious belief detached from natural research is now likely to command. Suppose that the revelation of fact and the revelation of faith are met together. Suppose that the progress of fact does not proceed, as Spencer would have it, from evolution to dissolution, but from evolution through apparent dissolution to real evolution; and that the splendid blossom of the greatest discovery of modern thought has as yet but begun to bud.

We ask for this aloe, precious and perfect, in the name of reason, that it may be rooted in the hope of everlasting life, for which it is our honorable service to contend.

We ask for this hope in the name of science, which has rendered unto nature the things that are nature's, but unwittingly unto God the things that are God's. The glory of the law moves on. The higher science has its prophets. Its scholars are to come. In an age when we are called upon to study "the sagacity and morality of plants," we may be justified in demanding an adaptation of sci-

entific method to the fine fibres and hidden seed of the human spirit.

If these things be so, the mind is dazzled by the vision of those future types of which both faith and science promise us so much. To what refinement and enforcement the high organizations of this present life may rise, he only can intelligently imagine who has the student's lens and the believer's eye. What man may be a century or two hence, what the average of nature with which he must contend, what the ideal by which he shall achieve superiority, what, in short, the intensification of his entire form of strife with his conditions, it is only possible for us to guess by some conception of the fact of spiritual nature, and the nature of a science based upon that fact. What the select man, survivor of this or the future environment, may become in the life beyond, to what unimagined evolution he may be liable, through what supreme equilibration of power incapable of dissolution the rhythm of spiritual motion shall sweep him, who can say?

Once again. We have spoken of the love of life as one of the constituent elements of

life; and, in this connection, we have observed that death sets in with the passion for death. It is reasonable to suggest that in the higher, as in the lower life, the analogy holds. In the strife for eternal existence, it may be true that the amount of contending desire represents the amount of contending power; that the love of eternal life, itself, bespeaks, to an extent, the capacity for it; that the instincts or the impulses of belief are not without their significance, other things being equal, as salvable agencies; in short, that the longing to live forever not only carries with it the power to conquer the materials of duration, but indicates in a measure the force of the life-principle in the soul. A man may live forever because he loves his eternal life, and he loves his eternal life because he is to live forever.

If, on the other hand, death sets in with the passion for death, may there be a significance invisible and invincible as a zymotic disease, in the reluctance to conquer immortality which is sometimes cultivated either as a conscious whim, or a supposed sign of mental strength? Hume speaks, somewhere, of a "decline of soul." Side by side with what may be almost

called devout unbelievers, we find men whose skepticism as to spiritual facts is a species of new game, a philosophical lawn-tennis, wherewith to pass life's midsummer; and over against these, we find others still, by whom dispute with supernaturalism is rated as a synonym for force of character, and cultivated as an egotism rather than a consecration. May there not be among these cases of spiritual suicide? Has he perhaps already begun to die in whom the tolerance of death is so indulgently regarded? Is his life-principle already vitiated who can so idly court results which a sound and sane soul-vigor should abhor? "Earnestness is the path of life," says the Dhammapada, "Thoughtlessness the path of death. Those who are in earnest do not die; those who are thoughtless are as if dead already!"

Experts will tell us with what firmness, yet with what tenderness, the suicidal impulse is treated in hospitals for the insane; how the unnatural passion for death is discouraged by exposing its unnaturalness, or by fostering the feeble love of life, if that be possible; how gently the nature is aroused against itself; how surgically the diseased conditions are

handled, and how, upon the chance of the sufferer's recognizing his pathological position, and approaching himself as his own patient, all his hope of cure may hang.

It is by no means impossible that the suicidal nature of unbelief in a life to come, may yet find its soul-physicians in some psychological asylum of the future, wherein these diseases of the spirit shall be treated by a skill which must make our present methods of dealing with them seem, by contrast, like the blood-letting and strait-jacket, the dungeons and the chains of the Dark Age.

But once again: If these things be so, the familiar thought (even, as we have already seen, the familiar language) of the lower science has been the subject of a solemn unconscious selection in the service of that higher science of the soul to which we look.

In the struggle for immortality, the position of the individual holds a curiously interesting attitude toward the elevated nature of his environment. What is the insistence of individuality but the persistence of force? Or what its victory but a conservation of energy? What close economies there may be in spiritual

agency, or what Law of Variation in spiritual inheritance, we know not. What is the protoplasm of spirit we can but guess. What supernatural selection may be at work upon us, we have yet to learn.

And yet again: Supposing there to be any value in these thoughts, they go toward proving the doctrine of the survival of the fittest a sublime and an inspired thing. If we have been thinking in the right direction, that is a doctrine which substantiates religious belief only less than religious belief substantiates it.

The revelation of nature and the revelation of the Word confirm each other as respects this stimulating conception of the human problem. The old urgency of faith and the new impetus of science move upon the same pulley.

Life is a proof of the power to live. Life is a proof of the qualification for life. We compete and strive, we yield or conquer, we adjust our individuality to our odds, we adjust our moral freedom to our individuality, we adjust our elemental love of duration to our moral freedom, and the lawful result abides. The spiritually weakest goes to the wall. The

spiritually strongest conquers. He is the unfit who is beaten to death on the spiritual side of his nature. He is the fit survivor who saves his soul alive.

What manner of man may he be who shall be found capable of the final survival? Honest perplexity has its visions, and struggles toward them with noble discontent. Believing Christianity points to her Nazarene and clings to the feet of the sweet and solemn ideal which he has carved like a statue in the world.

Whether we have fixed our eyes upon the marble or the dream, the complicated nature of the struggle in which we are involved remains at least the one fact about which there can be no dispute. The finer we are, the more threads to our destinies. The stronger we are, the more strain upon our fibre. That first flaw of conduct which weakens our resistant power may find no steel fingers like those in the machinery of woolen-mills, which detect the defective threads and stop the weaving on the spot.

Supernatural selection has what may be called an artistic task in dealing with human character. The materials of duration may be

found in mere morality, or a martyr's fate; they may pause at veracity, or fly to aspiration; they may be sought in common humanity, or hide in exalted consecration.

Who shall say how the chance turns? At least, plainly, since law is justice, not against the paupers of heredity; not against the poor devils of the world as opposed to their betters. *Noblesse oblige* in the aristocracy of nature as in that of accident, and the highly-born may run the highest risks.

The man of many excellent qualities who protected himself at the expense of a woman — the woman of good intentions whose petty exactions defrauded a man of his best possibilities — might be beating the first retreat in the long struggle wherein the power of advance grows feeble faster than the consciousness of feebleness. The jocund entrance into the forest of worldliness, wherein, before we know it, the soul has lost the trail — the thin coating of social courage which we take for moral armor, when it may be only a species of metallic paint — the rust of selfishness wrought by sorrow or disease, and worn like an ornament by our unconscious vanity — might be

the sign of the weakness which should defeat us in the ultimate struggle for survival, under some tremendous moral emergency, or crushing spiritual strain.

Our self-respect arises like a knight, "without fear and without reproach," to defend such a view of the appeal of human life to human strength. Magnificent and terrible that challenge!

Is a man to be the weak, the worsted, the defective of nature? Is he crippled, maimed, unable of soul? Shall he surrender his chance at continuance for some inefficiency of temperament, or flabbiness of purpose, or lack of moral gentility? Shall he yield to that slight tendency to be satisfied with an undertone in ideals, which may be the first step toward spiritual discord that must resist harmonizing unless in finer hands than his?

Shall he narcotize the nerve, or loll away the muscularity of a soul that had fitness in its power and survival at its bid?

All that he hath, will he not give for his life?

V.

THE CHRISTIANITY OF CHRIST.

THE special ignorance of the generally educated presents a tempting subject for study; it might form the intellectual fad of a wearied scholar, with zest to himself and the public. There is a certain action of the mind, so swift and so easy that it might almost be called the toboggan tendency, to slide plump down into each recurrent delusion that makes a coasting-ground for society; to pick itself up, find its bruises, climb up, and do it all over again with undiminished simplicity and ardor. Nowhere is this curious inaccuracy of civilized intelligence more evident than in questions dealing with religious interests. We are used to it even in the detail of narrative literature. When one of the leading authors of America, a few years ago, wrote of the "wardens" of an orthodox Congregational church, one need not care the less for his novels, but one might

remember that he would have found it difficult to make an equivalent blunder upon any purely secular topic. So far as I know, only one reader, a clergyman, ever observed the slip. A brother novelist, of the same school, antedated the typewriter the other day, in a story, and half the critics in the country barked.

The latest illustration of intellectual tobogganing lies easily in the history of the Russian dreamer, whose peculiarities have become the æsthetico-religious play-ground of the literary world. Tolstoi must allow himself the privilege of many a veiled smile at the species of attention with which he has been honored. He is himself of far too sincere and strenuous a nature to comprehend the intellectual games for which he has furnished the open field. Shortly said, what is it that we have in the story of this interesting person and in his remarkable influence upon a certain phase of thought? There is given to us a highly-educated man with a consecrated conscience; the world has known such before. He has expressed views of truth protestant to a velvet-and-sealskin religion; in this particular he

does not stand alone. He has developed the genius of consistency; in this respect he is remarkable, but not original. He has tried to live the life of a Christian theorist; in this regard he is to be reverenced; he is not unique.

The attempt to imitate the life of Christ is a very old experiment. It began in the delicate nature of that preferred disciple whom we are told in literature older than "My Religion" that the Founder of our religion "loved." A classic which critical culture has been accustomed to regard as not inferior to "Anna Karenina," some time since familiarized the world with principles which it might have missed, had it waited until such date as presented Count Leo Tolstoi's rising genius to the approval of American critics.

Tolstoi is an earnest, intellectual man. He has written good books. He has lived a good life. He makes it his daily business to live a better. He has both the head and the heart to appreciate the supreme value of the personality of Jesus Christ, and he has the independence to pursue his own interpretation of that transcendent life in his own way. For

this he is to be admired and respected — to be studied, if you like. He is the latest prominent specimen of a clean departure from the trite in faith.

But any educated Christian knows that the history of his belief presents examples of courage as devout, of self-sacrifice as fine, of consecration as stimulating, of life as Christ-like. We are not sure that it would be impossible to find instances of interpretative vigor in the application of Christianity to affairs as worthy the attention of the realistic school of fiction. Even in flitting from one sentence to another, the mind carries flash-light pictures of dedicated lives dear to Christian memory. We see the soul of Luther daring the world — "Here I stand. I cannot otherwise. God help me. Amen"; Frederick Robertson, popular preacher of a fashionable church in which the undergraduates of Oxford stood packed to hear him, walking the streets by night, a sick, a dying man, to save the fallen women of Brighton; Dorothea Trüdel, healing the sick of Switzerland with no *materia medica* but that of a consecrated life and awful prayer; Elizabeth Frye, "visiting" her

Master "in prison," and Christianizing the penal system of the world. We recall those select spirits who, at any cost, stood pledged to protect the fugitive slave of our own country, presenting himself with the historic password, "I was a stranger, and ye took me in." We speak below our breath with reverence the name of Father Damien, that Christian priest who elected to take up his abode upon the leper-island of the Sandwich group, and there, a leper, died. We see with blinding eyes obscure homes that we have known, in which are the saintly sick, the voluntary poor, the neighborhood nurse; men and women who do not know worldly ambition when they look at it; who have consumed life in an unrecorded passion of self-sacrifice that shames our parlors, that shames our libraries, that shames our pillows, that shames our literature, and that shames our pulpits "for Christ's sake, Amen."

Now this Russian enthusiast, who flits from a shoemaker's bench to the manuscripts of his novels, may be far above most of us in his theory and practice of personal holiness; this does not affect the circumstance that his

standard has been equaled or excelled by better Christians than we are, and that the kind of religious deference which he has excited upon the part of literary criticism is in fact the result of imperfectly-trained vision. It is really nothing more than deficient education which has put this heavy emphasis upon the Sclavic idealist. We are not often reminded, but we cannot remember too often, that our critics, as a class, are not religious men, and that facts familiar to many minds of otherwise less general culture than the *littérateur* is supposed to possess, may easily be found out of his orbit. At the death of M. Léon Gozlan, no member of his family could tell whether he had professed the Jewish or the Christian religion, although he had written twenty volumes and fifteen comedies, and had edited ten newspapers. The specific ignorance of the irreligious intellect is natural; it is almost inevitable. Our culture follows the line of our sympathies. A mistake now and then is to be expected. What is called the faith of the higher life has not failed to find disciples in intellectual circles which have welcomed as "some new thing" the enthusiasm

older than Madame Guyon, as old as the first Oriental dreamer who concentrated his being upon the mystic OM, or projected his willing soul toward Nirvana. There is something very suggestive in the tendency of a certain class of educated minds to find religious inspiration *anywhere* except in the forms accepted by the mass of Christian believers. In our day, spiritualism has found amazing victims — not of the unlearned; theosophy, incredible adherents — not of the ignorant. It has proved more interesting that Koot Hoomi should appear in mid-ocean with a letter from India, than that Paul should be caught into the third heaven. Many a mind has gone reverently mad over Mozoomdar, which found no spiritual impetus in the Gospel of John. A man in New York capped the climax by sacrificing an ox to Jupiter in his back-parlor.

Now, it seems to us that the Tolstoi mania is, in part, another form of the same tendency. Canon Farrar has so well pointed out, in an earlier number of the "Forum," the antiquity of the Tolstoian experiment, that nothing remains to be said by way of historical foot-note upon that point. Our Russian noble is a

noble Russian, but he is not the originator of the faith. He may be even a little of a "crank" in certain particulars, though that is an accusation so common to the history of an audacious soul that one dare not make it flippantly. But this goes for nothing when realism turns its microscope upon him. The amount of it all seems to be that Tolstoi has simply, for the time, made religion fashionable. He has given belief prestige. One would suppose that he had discovered the Founder of the Christian religion. He has bestowed *éclat* upon the message of God to the world. He has revived an ancient and neglected publication. He has put the New Testament upon editorial tables. He has made the Saviour of mankind so "realistic" that art can afford to recognize him. He has, in short, introduced Jesus Christ to exclusive literary circles.

Some months since, snow fell in Charleston, South Carolina. A few faint flakes trembled down like falling stars. They were said to be the first for twenty years. Alert young eyes looked at them for the first time in their lives. Men ran out into the streets and caught the

melting wonder on their coat-sleeves, on their hands; they called to each other and exhibited the marvel excitedly. Aged shop-keepers came out of their doors and snatched at specimens. There may have been fifty flakes. The beautiful rime was the wonder of the moment and melted with it. A literary view of Christ is a passing play. It is phenomenal like the snow-flake of the South. It drops into graceful hands outstretched for the last fine fancy; it is overturned in them, and studied, and prettily discussed — and melts in them to make room for the next highly-crystallized wonder.

When we come to the heart of the matter, it is not "Launcelot nor another" that is in question. It occurs to us in the course of time that Tolstoi is not the Redeemer of the world and Mr. Howells his prophet. Show us the Greek scholar who takes his Plato in translation, and we show you the Christian who takes his Christ at second-hand. After all, it is the superb directness of Tolstoi which has given such passing importance to his views. Somebody in the world usually recognizes an honest man. It is always interesting to be straightforward. The Russian has gone sharp to the

mark. He read his Christ in the original. In our day this practice is out of date. When we have done as much, we may be equipped so far as to become counselors-at-law of the Christian faith. Until we have, any fanatic who has, may be our superior in the practical graces of Christianity. It is possible that the Lord would not now require a wealthy follower to make shoes, and seclude that amount of trade from the shoemaker; but the disciple who does it "in his name," is by simple virtue of the beautiful logic of self-denial an attorney for the truth who goes far to win the case. A man may swallow the Nicene Creed, and digest the Thirty-nine Articles, but not be fit to black the last boot made by the amateur shoemaker who has swept the "chord of self in music out of sight," in the ardent struggle to discover what Jesus Christ really meant by the world and what it is the world's duty to do about it. Making every allowance for the proportion of delusion or alienated good sense in Tolstoi, he is probably closer than most of us to the principles of Christianity. His sincerity, his simplicity and unselfishness, penetrated by his commanding

intelligence, have done spiritual service with which his renewal of an ancient interpretative experiment was in useful harmony. His is a consecrated intelligence. The world never fails to respond to that.

Meanwhile, there is no doubt about it, we are pitiably muddled about the whole Christian idea. The religion of Jesus has devastated itself with practical blunders enough to have destroyed a less robust faith or one of lower origin. We may paraphrase the celebrated cry of Madame Roland: "Oh Christianity! Christianity! How many crimes are committed in thy name!" The central figure of human history, the Galilean has founded a faith upon which he distinctly urges that the survival of the soul depends. Yet, after two thousand years of Christian culture, our practical results are not unlike the Russian peasant's view of the Trinity — "The Saviour, Mother of God, and St. Nicholas." Considered as the disciples of a religion representing the awful claim of Christianity, we are surprisingly disintegrated by those vagaries and weaknesses which defeat unity and organization. We are corroded by worldliness of heart. We are im-

prisoned in narrowness of intellect. We are disgraced by a defective humanity.

The essential principles of Jesus Christ seem to be reduced to three. The first of these is the imperious demand for a personal consecration to right, so select, so severe, so lofty, and so sustained that it is to be comprehended only through achievement. Far beyond our brightest fact we see it shining in a dazzling mist, as one sees the outline of the Celestial City in that old engraving setting forth the course of Bunyan's Pilgrim — the one supreme ideal of the earth. Who was Christ? A carpenter become a rabbi — what we should call a "self-made" itinerant preacher. What has he done? Guided the conscience and created the hope of the world. How did he do it? By personal holiness nothing less than awful. To study this highly-sensitized nature even as an intellectual exercise, for an hour, is to breathe rarefied air. We descend from it, panting, as one does from a great poem or a mountain. What would be the effect of a thorough moral assimilation of this delicate atmosphere? What refinement of

the sensibility! What nutrition of the soul! What sacred fire to the brain! What spiritual courtliness to the conduct!

What do Christian believers undertake? Simply the imitation of the most intense life the world has known. An acute absorption in the process would seem to be logically necessary. Most of us go about it as we go to a *matinée* where the programme is too familiar. What does the Founder of our religion demand? Absolutely, the surrender of personal preference to his theory of life. Yet the last thing which we seem likely to do is to agree upon his theory. Whatever else it is not, it is at least, beyond dispute, a theory of breathless self-sacrifice. One of the greatest Pagans of our day has said: "What I look to, is the time when the impulse to help our fellows shall be as immediate and as irresistible as that which I feel to grasp something if I am falling." In such a conception of life, call it by what name we will, "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by." The Christian doctrine is in many cases most vividly expressed by an outsider, perhaps because he takes a fresher view of it. A sensible religious writer has put it in this way: —

"The Christian law is the law of love. Whoever puts the rules of art above the law of love is a Pagan. He who habitually seeks to gratify his own tastes rather than to do good to all men as he has opportunity, is not a Christian but a Pagan."

Now, whatever else he was or was not, and whatever he meant or did not mean, Jesus Christ was essentially an unworldly man. The question is not, Are we all to become evangelists, and pool our property, and allow ourselves to be thrashed by bullies? Shall Beacon Street adopt the table manners of Capernaum? Shall the *talîth* of Palestine be made the fashion in the New England climate? The question is, What would the Founder of our faith do in our situation? Have we got at the sense of it? Have we applied Christianity? Have we made a science of the divine art whose principles he impersonated? Have we the genius of self-sacrifice? Have we the passion of unworldliness?

There is a fruit-market in Boston which has existed for thirty years upon the whims of the rich. Hamburg grapes at ten dollars a pound are regularly in stock. In the winter, strawberries and asparagus sell easily at three dol-

lars a box or a bunch. When the first Florida berries come, thirteen in a cup, at four dollars a cup, parties are supplied. One hundred and twenty-five dollars' worth of fruit to a single order causes the dealer no surprise.

A Chinese vase of *sang de bœuf* finds a purchaser comfortably at five thousand dollars. The famous peach-blow vase was sold for fourteen thousand. A mantelpiece costing five thousand dollars is no startling feature in our homes. The catalogue price of Ivan-Romanoff, the Siberian wolf-hound, in the last New York dog-show, was ten thousand dollars. A horse sold the other day for fifty thousand, and a distinguished philanthropist pronounced him "cheap at that." There is a single stone slab valued at forty thousand dollars, laid in front of a well-known private dwelling in New York. It is no uncommon thing to give fifty thousand dollars for a racing-yacht; the average cost of repairs or improvements on such a boat, while in dock between regattas, would maintain an economical family for a year. One thousand dollars a week for the support of a cruising-boat is a familiar figure. Twenty thousand dollars for

a woman's dress is not an unknown price. The jewelry of our ladies has reached such value that they dare not wear their gems; such pricelessness is sewn into invisible seams that female fashion on a summer tour is a temptation to a train wrecker. It is a well-known fact that many families have abandoned the use of their silver, which finds a lodging in a safe deposit vault, while the dinner-table is decorated, and the burglar defied, with plated ware. It is perfectly understood that paste rests upon fair bosoms, while the diamond glitters at the banker's. Some years since it was found that the expenditure for the maintenance of the royal stables exceeded the entire sum set apart for public education in Great Britain. The Bishop of Manchester once read to his congregation the following passage, saying that he had received it from a young lady who wished to know what time there was in her life for Christian work : —

"We breakfast about ten. Breakfast occupies the best part of an hour, during which we read our letters and pick up the latest news in the papers. After that we have to go and answer our letters, and my mother expects me to write her notes of

invitation or to reply to such. Then I have to go into the conservatory and feed the canaries and parrots, and cut off the dead leaves and faded flowers from the plants. Then it is time to dress for lunch, and at two o'clock we lunch. At three my mother likes me to go with her when she makes her calls, and we then come home to a five-o'clock tea, when some friends drop in. After that we get ready to take our drive in the park, and then we go home to dinner; and after dinner we go to the theatre or the opera; and then when we get home I am so dreadfully tired that I don't know what to do."

"It 's not the rents I look to," said the undertaker-landlord of a wretched tenement block in London to Octavia Hill; "it 's the deaths I get out of the houses." Some years ago fashionable New York did penance by a spurt of charity in the then famous case of James Howard, an industrious, sober, honest American, who threw a stone into a plumber's window, and stole a few brass faucets to buy bread for children who were starving, and for a wife dying of consumption. For a few days the unsavory street where he lived glittered with liveried carriages, whose occupants

amused themselves by playing My Lady Bountiful to that astounded family, and then rolled away to the next new scene in the private theatricals of gay life.

In a New England town the other day, a newsboy, hardly higher than the platform, was run over by a horse-car and fatally hurt. What did this self-supporting baby of six years, when writhing in the last agonies of a terrible death? He called piteously for his mother. To shriek upon her breast? That she might clasp him while the surgeon worked? To give her his day's earnings. "I 've saved 'em mother," he cried. "I 've saved 'em all. Here they are." When his little clenched, dirty hand fell rigid, it was found to contain four cents.

The city of Detroit may yet remember the case of "Gertie," which touched the press of the country at the time. A passer through Clinton Street one day observed a little Irish boy hiding in a door-way and crying. A sympathetic inquiry brought to light one of the most exquisite stories ever recorded of the sick poor. In a wretched cellar a little girl of ten lay very ill. The window-panes were broken

(it was March, by the way) and variously stuffed. For one pane the supply of tenement upholstery had given out. The wind and the boys looked in easily. Just within range of curious eyes the cot of the sick child was stretched. The *gamins* of Clinton Street discovered her plight. One little fellow dropped an orange through the broken glass; a plaintive voice thanked the unseen giver gratefully. This touching mercy became the fashion in that poor neighborhood. Every day saw the cubs of the street cuddling like cossets outside that window. Wisps of evergreen swept out of florists' doors, broken flowers thrown away, offerings of fruit with the decayed part cut out — every delicacy for the sick that the resources of Clinton Street admitted of, went through that broken pane. One little fellow begged a bunch of frozen Malaga grapes from a dealer, to whom he offered his ragged cap in payment. One day the boys said, "Our Gertie is dead," and the Christian street-boys became the mourners behind the hearse of the starved and frozen child.

Now, can any of us dare to say that a state of civilization in which such things are not

only possible, but in which such extremes of human ease and misery are tolerated as the necessary conditions of society, represents the Christianity of Christ? Says Isaac Taylor: —

"To insure its large purpose of good-will to man, the law of Christ spreads out its claims very far beyond the circle of mere pity or natural kindness, and in absolute and peremptory terms demands for the use of the poor, the ignorant, the wretched — and demands from every one who names the name of Christ — the whole residue of talents, wealth, time that may remain after primary claims have been satisfied."

I do not forget that we are thought to be the most charitable people on the face of the earth. I do not forget the vast machinery of our public relief and the reputable organization of our church benevolence, nor the dew of our private mercies; but, taking us at our highest, and our attempts to live the unworldly life at their strongest, and the entire pitiful result at its best, I wonder that the Lord of the Christian religion does not whip us out of our *bric-à-brac* lives, and the whole temple of humanity that we have degraded, with the fine lash of his holy scorn.

Next to the personal consecration of Christ, we come upon the fundamental principle of his superb liberality. It would be incredible, if it were not so familiar a fact as to give a trite thought, that the followers of this generous-hearted Leader should have squarely turned their backs upon his precept and performance in this regard. Bigotry may be called the ecclesiastical vice, as worldliness is the personal one of the Christian *cultus*. Shelley and Leigh Hunt, talking together once, in their light, literary way, made this memorable concession to Christianity: "What might not this religion do, if it relied on charity, not on creed?" The worst of it is, that the progress of time, which, after all, does something for most of us in most respects, does not seem to have advanced us radically in this. The Inquisition changes its basis, that is all. A child inquired with terror, on first hearing of the Andover controversy, "Are they heretics, Mamma? Will they be burned?" For the rack and the molten Virgin, we have the ordination service and the examination before the Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. The torture by

insomnia has only taken on a finer phase. A good man who is not sure that the Bible insists upon belief in everlasting damnation as a condition of reliable character, is pronounced unfit to teach to cannibals the elements of Christian courtesy. There is no doubt that young men of the finest dedication and most original disposition of thought are warned out of our pulpits to-day by the theological torture-chamber through which a virile conscience must pass before the authority of the church is laid upon the longing to preach the gospel of love to men. Robert Ingersoll is the direct descendant of the Westminster Confession. "Brethren," cried Cromwell to the framers of that moral rack, "I beseech you in the bowels of the Lord, believe it possible that you may be mistaken!"

In a Southern town known to the writer, seven churches of different sects exist. Not one is able to support a pastor. Itinerants of different denominations visit this interesting and typical place by turns. One Sunday you have Hobson's choice of your Methodist; the next you must play Lutheran; and so on. The whole village turns out, and prays ac-

cordingly. The days of worship are known as Baptist Sunday, or Orthodox Sunday, or Universalist Sunday, or whatever it may be. "But when," asked a visitor to this extraordinary people, "when is the Lord's Day?"

A stranger happening in at Dean Stanley's service came away once saying: "I went to learn the way to heaven; I was told the way to Palestine." The case is similar with us in this wise. Many and dreary are the times that we go to the religion of our day to learn the way to heaven, and we are taught the way to a creed. We go panting with spiritual thirst and aching with spiritual hunger; we are fed with theological stones. We go longing for peace; we find a sword. We go in search of a divine Master; we get the evangelical council. We seek the holy and the humble instruction that trains a soul for the sacred diploma of the religious teacher; we find a lawsuit. We seek the cross of Christ; we find the Supreme Court.

It is a well-known fact that ardent workers in the temperance movement find the grog-shops and the churches their chief obstacles. You soon learn to count the liquor-dealer and

the communicant almost equally out of rank with you in your solitary battle. You must bring your drunkard to the vestry, or he may as well go drink. You must save your "reformed man" in the denomination, or you may collect your library and piano for the club-room — as very likely you will — from the impenitent world. I was once present at a touching scene where the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered in the presence of a crowd of fallen men, struggling for a new life. These poor fellows could not have borne so much as the odor of the sacred wine; it would have set their bodies and souls on fire. Pure water filled the nicked-plated tankard of the communion service. The bread and the water of life were blessed before the wistful gaze of these reverent castaways. The clergyman officiating, an old man who had dedicated his age to the temperance work, and a dozen poor, obscure, unflocked church-members in the communicants' seats, were the only representatives of the church of Christ present at a scene which was a matter of intense public interest in the city, and of severe ecclesiastical blame to the temperance people.

It is amazing that we should even have to remind ourselves that with all this dead-line of religious respectability the Founder of our faith had no more to do than he had with the moral example of Herod. Christ was the come-outer of the day. He was the Protestant; he was the Liberal; he was the victim of spiritual independence. His was the faith that rises

> "Just to scorn the consequence,
> And just to do the thing."

His teaching was one thrilling protest against ecclesiasticism. His life was one pathetic plea for religious freedom. Love thy God and thy neighbor, and follow me; his command and our duty are in those few and simple words. He cut down doctrinism and dogmatism as a mower cuts down thistles. In his insistence on practical holiness there was no room for chatter about creeds. He gave himself to God and to miserable men. This fervent young rabbi had no time to formulate a "Shorter Catechism."

Fancy, for the nonce, our Lord appointed chairman of the examining committee of a heresy-hunting church to-day. One imagines

the eloquent silence with which he would sit out the accepted tests of fitness for membership in his visible church. What does the candidate believe concerning the total depravity of all mankind? Is he aware that he committed the sin of Adam? What are his views upon the eternal damnation of the finally impenitent? Has he faith in the sanctity of immersion? Does he accept the sacrament of infant sprinkling? Test his knowledge of the Trinity. Try his theory of the nature and office of the Holy Ghost. Is he sound upon the doctrine of election? Does he totter upon justification by faith?

Now conceive it to be the turn of the mute presiding Officer to put questions to the candidate. One may imagine that the test-questions for religious character would now take a surprising turn. Have you a pure heart? Do you love the Lord your God with the whole of it? Explain to us your relation with your neighbors. Are you beloved in your home? Can you control your temper? Do you talk scandal? Are you familiar with the condition of the poor? What are your methods of relieving it? Can you happily

give disagreeable service to the sick? How do you bear physical suffering when it falls to your own lot? How many drunkards have you tried to reform? What outcasts have you sought to save? What mourners have you comforted? On what social theory do you invite guests to your house? What proportion of your income do you give to the needs of others? What do you understand by prayer to God? What is your idea of a Christ-like life?

The third vital characteristic of the Christianity of Christ plainly consists in his unsparing and unswerving democracy. It is not possible to put too great an emphasis upon this fixed and terribly-neglected truth. We say in glib familiar phrase that the basis of Christianity is the brotherhood of humanity — what has been usefully called the "enthusiasm of humanity." Not one in twenty of us realizes that this means an ideal of daily life as far above our own as the centre of the solar system is above the level of the sea. Which of us gives the recognition of imitation to the astonishing example of Jesus in this regard? Christ was

the educated and sanctified socialist. He was the consistent democrat. He was the consecrated agitator. Social rank simply did not exist for him. Caste he scorned. A fisherman was his most intimate friend. He accepted the hospitality of an ostracized man. He conversed fearlessly and naturally with abandoned women. He did not refuse to penitent outcasts the preciousness of his personal friendship. He was never known to shrink from foul diseases. Vulgar natures he treated with the patience of high refinement. The "common people" loved him. He denounced the fashionable shams of his times with the *nonchalance* of an emperor and the intelligence of an artisan. He scathed the petty pretensions of the leaders of society with that indifference to criticism characteristic of high birth, and that sympathy with what we call the "lower classes" incident to a personal experience of poverty. His social theories held the relentlessness of love. There is no polite way of evading them. There is no well-bred opportunity of ignoring them. The Christianity of Christ must meet them point-blank. They are its essential test. They are its first

and final demand. Malthus has reminded us that the histories of mankind which we possess are, in general, only histories of the higher classes. Authentic Christianity must be a history of the masses. Socially considered, a Christian must be, in a sense, interestingly varied from the old theological one, "born again." He has new kin, he makes new neighbors, he incurs new social obligations, he readjusts his position in human society, or he might as well go call himself a Druid.

The fashionable church has received its full share of derision, from critics who may not be worthy of a back seat in it; but that does not affect the fact that it deserves all it gets. The recent popular attack upon the pew-rental system may not be made altogether from a devout point of view; none the less it will do good. Sexton Williams has let fly a fiery-winged truth; and the girl-reporter who found herself welcomed by only five New York churches, although employed in the service of the newspapers rather than of the Lord, has put her shabbily-gloved finger upon the spot where the tuberculosis of our religious system sets in. It is the undecorated fact, that if

Jesus Christ were to enter almost any of our influential churches to-day he would be shown into the back gallery; and he could not obtain admission to our parlors without a letter of introduction from some person in our "set." "You will find," says a nice observer, "that so far as people are reached by religious worship outside of their especial religious belief, it is the social recognition which has won them."

In a luxurious home, whose invitations are not declined, whose hospitality is familiar to many distinguished men and women of our land, there may be found, any day, mingled with the most gifted guests, plain, poor, obscure people, quite unknown in "society." I once saw, at a breakfast at this house, the foremost poet in the country seated beside a massage rubber, a poor girl training herself for the practice of medicine, and in need of two things — a good breakfast and a glimpse into the cultivated world. She had both, in the Lord's name, in that Christian home. Yet the spirit of that ideal hospitality is so rare that we tell of it as we do of heroic deeds. The Christianity of Christ would make it so

common that we should notice it only as we do the sunrise.

There does not exist outside of the New Testament such a conception of the Christian spirit as the great Frenchman (not distinguished for ecclesiastical views of God, but exiled for his practical love of man) gave us in the greatest work of fiction since Shakespeare. Who forgets the Bishop in "Les Misérables," immortal because he acted like Christ? His palace was converted into a hospital, his income expended for the suffering. Out of the luxuries of his highly civilized past, the "spiritual man of the world" (as Margaret Fuller would put it) had saved an elegant toilet-case, a few silver plates, and silver candlesticks. "Knock *there*," said the citizen to the ex-galley-slave whom no other roof would shelter.

"The Bishop touched his hand gently, and said: —

"'You need not tell me who you are. This is not my house; it is the house of Christ. It does not ask any comer whether he has a name, but whether he has an affliction.'"

In all uninspired literature what is finer

than the scene between the Bishop and Valjean, when the gendarmes bring the arrested guest and silver back to this threshold of superhuman hospitality.

"'Ah, there you are!' said Monseigneur; 'I am glad to see you. But I gave you the candlesticks also, which are silver like the rest and would bring you two hundred francs. Why did you not take them along with your plate?'"

Left alone with the astounded thief, the Christian idealist grew stern and solemn: —

"'Never forget that you have promised me to use this silver to become an honest man. . . . Jean Valjean, my brother, you belong no longer to evil but to good. It is your soul that I am buying for you. I withdraw it from dark thoughts and from the spirit of perdition, and I give it to God!'"

The child of such a spiritual god-father, who wonders that Jean Valjean, the galley slave, becomes Mayor Madeleine, the saint of a district, and the protector of every despised and rejected creature in it? It is thus that the Christianity of Christ ought to be spiritually inherited. The idea cultivated by the liturgic church, that the laying-on of apostolic

hands creates an ancestry of priestly power, is a pleasant fancy, pale beside what might be the tremendous facts of moral heredity in the Christian life. The possibilities of culture in this direction are unfathomed. Said Daniel Webster, in his private confession of faith : —

"I believe that the experiments and subtleties of human wisdom are more likely to obscure than to enlighten the revealed will of God, and that he is the most accomplished scholar who has been educated at the feet of Jesus, and in the College of Fishermen."

When all is said, it comes to this: Type, not argument, governs men; and the Christ-type will control the world just as soon as and no sooner than it is consistent, simple, ardent, and sincere. Christianity cannot expect to become a science on inattention which would destroy the perfection of a phonograph, nor to conquer society by a series of "bolting" experiments which would defeat any political party known to civilized nations. Common sense holds the balance of power in religion as much as it does in affairs. There is what we may call a common spirituality, to which human respect always defers. The Christianity

of Christ necessitates a personal consecration fanned to a white-heat that burns to ashes all the ordinary standards of conduct; involves a religious toleration "all love, and of love all worthy;" requires an estimate of social values absolutely revolutionary to our accepted models.

The time can come, and if it can, it must, when the New Testament shall be intelligently adapted to the twentieth century. The time must come, and if it must, it can, when spiritual caste shall be the only basis of social rank. If Christ's life means anything, this is inevitable. The imagination falters before the progress of a consecrated sociology. It would be an interesting science to a cynic, and fascinating to an enthusiast. "The night is far spent, O householders," said Gautama; "it is time for you to do what you deem most fit."

It has been well said that all problems resolve themselves into the problem of personal righteousness. The key to our perplexities lies no further than a devout and dedicated heart. The life of the Nazarene will bewilder society with astigmatic optical interpretations

not an hour beyond the time when we bring to bear upon it the lens of a public purity that shuts out private difference or default; as foreign war called from the bickering Hellenes "Greek curses to Persia" and "Greek tears to Athens."

Outside of touching individual exceptions, which prove the rule with a kind of divine silence and shame like that in which our Master wrote with his finger on the ground in the presence of the erring woman, the Christianity of Christ is an unachieved ideal; but it is as practicable as that of truth or honor. And, after all, it is one of our "literary class" who has put the whole argument for us in these reverberating words: —

"If Jesus Christ is a man,
And only a man, I say
That of all mankind I cleave to him,
And to him will cleave alway.

"If Jesus Christ is a God,
And the only God, I swear
I will follow Him through heaven and hell,
The earth, the sea, and the air!"

VI.

THE PSYCHICAL OPPORTUNITY.

In February, 1882, there was organized in London a society which had what one is half tempted to call the opportunity of the century in its hands. In these days, — when the multiple power of the unit has reached a point of social infliction which makes every fresh combination of human beings an object of dread, if not of suspicion; when the well-instructed citizen adds to his litany: "Deliver us from associations, and lead us not into committees!" when people who draw up a constitution and by-laws, for any purpose whatever, must show their charter, or stand back in the name of over-organized humanity, — it is much to say of any newly associated effort that its final cause seems so adequate as that of the Society for Psychical Research.

The prospectus of this society says: —

"It has been widely felt that the present is an

opportune time for making an organized and systematic attempt to investigate that large group of debatable phenomena designated by such terms as mesmeric, psychical, and spiritualistic. From the recorded testimony of many competent witnesses, past and present, including observations recently made by scientific men of eminence in various countries, there appears to be, amidst much illusion and deception, an important body of remarkable phenomena, which are *primâ facie* inexplicable on any generally recognized hypothesis, and which, if incontestably established, would be of the highest possible value."

It is not necessary to quarrel with the assertion of the well-known and well-informed gentlemen who stand sponsors for this society, when they proceed to say that

"The task of examining such residual phenomena has often been undertaken by individual effort, but never hitherto by a scientific society organized on a sufficiently broad basis."

When the greatest intellectual discovery of our times was made, it was wrought out of the inductive method, inch by inch, laboriously, consistently, and triumphantly. The theory of evolution was a masterpiece of loving toil,

and of relentless logic. Darwin[1] was twenty-two years in collecting and controlling the material for the "Origin of Species" and the "Descent of Man." Wallace, who competed with him for the formulation of the evolutionary law, was submerged like one of their own shells in the waves that beat upon the shores of the Malay archipelago. These men gave their souls and bodies to become students of the habits of a mollusk or a monkey, the family peculiarities of a bug or a bird, the private biographies of a mastodon or a polyp, the measurable but imperceptible movement of a glacier, the ancestry of a parasite, the vanity of a butterfly, the digestion of a fly-catcher, the moral nature of a climbing plant, or the journey of an insect from one desert island to another upon a floating bough.

Induction, which is as familiar as Bacon, and as old as philosophy, became, in the hands of the "Greatest since Newton," an ap-

[1] "It occurred to me," he says, "in 1837, that something might perhaps be made out on this question by patiently accumulating and reflecting. . . . *After five years' work, I allowed myself to speculate on the subject* . . . from that period to the present day, I have steadily pursued the same object." — Introduction to *Origin of Species*, published in 1859.

plied force which has taught the century — nay, which has taught all time and all truth — a solemn lesson. Two things are needed to the discovery of a great principle: the power to attend, and the power to infer. We might add a third, the power to imagine, which may be overlooked in the construction of important theory; but, whatever may be said of that, the power to attend, coming first in order, must be first considered. Darwin's colossal success was owing, to an extent which it is impossible for a lesser mind to measure, to his almost supernatural power of attention to the natural; his superhuman patience of observation and record. He observed and recorded as no other man of our day has done; his power of inference proved equal to his observing and recording power; and we have the doctrine of evolution by which physical science has been the first, but will not be the last, may even prove to be the least of human interests yet to profit unspeakably.

It would seem that the trained minds called to the leadership of the new psychical movement have been prompt to turn the *geist* of the century in the last direction in which we

should have looked for it. The current that wrought marvels out of stocks and stones they propose to pour upon air and essence. What conquered matter shall assail mind. What ordered order shall dominate the disorderly. The scientific method shall now rule the unscientific madness, and we shall see what we shall see.

In the metaphysical and in the physical worlds the legal fibre is essentially the same. The material differs more than the method. In this case there exists one distinction: that it is in a peculiar sense to the help of the unlearned that the learned have appealed in the work of the psychical organizations. Here is a mass of, let us say, asserted but unverified fact, which, if true, is of immeasurable importance to the interests of the human race. Such verification is not, as yet, to be found in libraries or in laboratories. Telescope and microscope, chip-hammer and retort, do not serve the case. The literature of the subject is, in great part, untested, illegal, whimsical, prehistoric to the spirit of the scientific era, and to the spirit in which, if at all, such a subject must now be approached. Here we

have to deal with an inchoate accumulation of mind-facts or soul-facts, of which the mind or the soul must be clerk, witness, judge, and juror. Here, especially, we have to do with confused freshets and land-slides of material which, preëminently above other material that science has sought to arrange and label, depends upon the intelligence and veracity of human beings for its classification. Here, in short, we come yesterday, to-day, and forever, jaggedly against the supreme difficulties attaching to the validity and credibility of testimony. Here, because of the supremacy of these difficulties, superstition and science must not shoot, but grapple.

Hence, we see, with a keen sense of their wisdom, the officers of the psychical societies appealing, at the outset, to the public for co-operation in the work of investigating that which is hidden, not in desert islands, or in glaciers, or in craters, or in crucibles, or in cuneiform inscriptions, but in human experience. On human intelligence and veracity the test must strike; it would seem that the electric light of science blazes white enough now, if ever, to try them. Did it seem a du-

bious experiment to flood the English-reading world with little circulars asking for authentic cases of mind-reading, or visions, as reported at first-hand by reporters willing to be personally investigated? Was it with amusement that we first saw these dignified gentlemen subpœna apparitions from the most intelligent families? Did we fall into the automatic attitudes of perplexity when English science solemnly sent social cards to haunted houses? Did we ask why this precious ointment was not sold to the poor, when we saw learned men playing the "Willing Game" in country-houses to find out whether the human mind can get through sealed walls? And when one of the most important philosophical chairs in this country is represented on the committee inviting spiritualistic mediums to "demonstrate to us experimentally their possession of peculiar powers," do we sneer or smile?

If we are wise, we shall do neither. It may not be too much to say that the greatest physical and metaphysical scholars of our day can do no better thing with their gifts, or their greatness, than to apply to the psychical facts the sheer force which has conquered the phys-

ical — the force that adequately observes and records before inferring; or, as Darwin puts it, that "accumulates" before "reflecting." As the apostle of evolution collected, collated, colligated his enormous array of facts before theorizing, they who undertake this other task would collect, collate, and colligate the disarray of their facts before they theorize.

Men have dedicated their lives to the classification of an insect, or the cultivation of an accent. Why not study the power which makes one man able to make another say Peter Piper, across the width of the house, with the doors shut? The spirit which gave to the world her great scientific gospel devoured itself till it knew why the flesh of a creature invisible without the miscroscope, was of the color of the leaf on which it lived and died. Why, then, should not a man keep tally of the relative number of times that a blindfold subject will select the right card from a pack? "High authorities" have wearied themselves to account for the difference in the molars and premolars within the jaws of the dog and the Tasmanian wolf. May not a scientist eat mustard, to see if his mesmeric recipient will say that his mouth is

burnt? Or even ask why a valuable piece of property stands unrented for a generation, because a dead woman is said to be heard sobbing in it? In brief, are not the methods which overcome the mysteries of matter entitled to the same exercise and to the same respect that they have had, when they are applied to the mysteries of mind? Here, we say, are the facts. Hundreds of people, whose word of honor is as good intellectual coin as that of the reader of this page or the writer of this paper have testified to the conveyance of thought, without visible or audible or tangible media, from embodied mind to embodied mind; to the tragic or the trivial incidents of mesmerism; to the coincidence of dreams; to the prophecy of mental convictions; to the visual appearance of the distant living; to the sight or sign of what is thought to be the more distant dead.

Thousands of sensible and reliable men and women to-day believe these things on the strength of personal experience; and, believing, accept them with such explanation of their own as they may, in default of any from silent science. It would seem as if these circum-

stances were of as much importance to science as the transverse lamellæ in the beak of a shoveler duck, or the climate of the lowlands under the equator during the severe part of the glacial period.

A cautious Spiritualist, prominently identified with the movements of his sect, in reply to inquiries made for use in this paper writes: —

"I think it would be within bounds to say, that in this country, the number who have by personal investigation come into what they believe to be a knowledge of spirit return and manifestation is not less than 2,000,000, and that a still larger number have experienced enough to satisfy them that there 'is something in it,' but how much they don't know."

Estimates two or three times as large are made by less careful zealots. The writer of the article on Spiritualism in the "American Encyclopædia," says: —

"As the organized bodies of Spiritualists include but a small proportion of those who wholly or partially accept these phenomena, it is impossible to make even an approximate estimate of their number."

In Great Britain, the number is supposed to be larger than among ourselves. Here, let

us say, to take the most modest figures, are two millions of our people, intelligent enough to conduct the affairs and obey the laws of average civilized society, who habitually and confidently approach the awful verities of death through the unexplained trance which we content ourselves with calling a morbid nervous condition; people whose main religious faith is formulated — God help them! — in the columns of papers most of which we never read if we can help it, or in the pages of what they are pleased to call a New Bible, spiritually communicated through mediums of the sect. Say what we may (and we ought to say it) of the nonsense, say what we may of the fraud, of the jugglery, the hysteria, the blasphemy mixed to a mush with the whole matter, the significant fact remains, that here is a huge class not of the lowest or most illiterate, while not yet, to any marked extent, of the wisest or highest, who believe themselves, in our highly-illuminated times, to have found some means of access to the consciousness of their dead. Here is the massive bulwark of the mystery — be it from within or from without; were it from above or from below; call it

a base trick or a glorious possibility — where the Prince of the Power of the Air intrenches himself; that he gives or assumes to give, or is believed to give to the starving human heart, bereaved of its bread of life, the crumbs from the table of Love and Death. Were it not as great a deed, is it not as large a duty, to hunt down the facts behind this faith, to grip the truth from out this error, to have this law that lies between the body and the soul, as it were to discover the link between a monkey and a man?

Modern science is systematically severe in the conditions which she lays upon the spirit of inquiry. The spirit of inquiry may, in turn, demand something of her. We say a great deal in these days about the scientific basis of thought and action. What do we mean by it? We suppose ourselves to mean that a subject shall be approached with two qualifications: equipment and candor; the presence of equivalent ability, and the absence of nullifying prejudice. These two endowments we have the right to expect of any investigators who penetrate the unexplored upon

the map of Truth. We may assume that the eminent officers and members of the psychical societies represent a wide enough range of training, psychological and physiological, religious and skeptical, to deprive us of all necessity to question their possession of the first of these conditions. As to the latter, we have read of the chemist who said to a philosopher: "But the chemical facts, my dear sir, are precisely the reverse of what you suppose." "Have the goodness, then," was the instantaneous reply, "to tell me what they are, that I may explain them on my system." Such a spirit, which, alas! is newer than the story, would be worse than no spirit at all, in the attempt to bring down so subtle and mocking a truth as that which flies or floats in obscure psychical phenomena. We have to deal now with wings, not clay; we must use arrows and nets, not derricks and dynamite. We must take straight lines through infinite ether, and measure the velocities of the zephyrs, and the atmospheric pressure of mists. We have to keep the judgment as open as a cloud to the colors of the sun. Our observation must be aerometric.

There were scholars among the contemporaries of Galileo who never would consent to look through a telescope, lest they should be compelled to admit the existence of the stars which he had discovered. Such intellectual palsy is not out of the world's system yet. It is the rarest thing upon earth to be fair. It is a rarer thing, among what are called scientific minds, than this paper has space to justify itself for asserting. Of all human teachers, they whose claim to our respect is founded most confidently upon their endowment fail us sometimes most roundly in this secondary qualification of simple, human candor. The bigotry of the laboratory and the library is quite as robust as the bigotry of the altar and the creed. The *præjudicium* which is infiltrated with matter and fact is as stiff as that which has become hygroscopic of mind and theory. We hear a great deal about the value of scientific evidence. We have the right to ask a great deal of the scientific attitude. What should it be? That which George Eliot would call one of "massive receptiveness." What must it be? That which will stand the test of its own primer and grammar.

Wise are they who would be unsparing as a sieve made from the hair on the brows of Minerva, in their definition of "evidence;" what sifts through those exquisite meshes is worth the pains. An imperceptible jar of human prejudice may spoil the finest web of attention and inference that ever the human mind has wrought. It is his first privilege, who would take the attitude that qualifies him for handling delicate evidence, to see to it that his candor is educated equally with his skill. We have passed the time when a man might assume the name of philosopher, who did not hesitate to say that he would rather be in the wrong with Plato than in the right with his opponents. What is it, indeed, to be candid, but to be willing to see a thing turn out either way? What is the scientific spirit, but the honest spirit? What is the investigating power, but the judicial power? What is it to be wise, but to be just?

A keen modern writer has well said, that by the time a man becomes an authority in any scientific subject he becomes a nuisance upon it, because he is sure to retain errors which were in vogue when he was young, but

which a newer wisdom has rejected. Such an accusation ought to become, in proportion to the enlightenment of the age, unjust or impossible. The qualification of candor should grow as fast as that of equipment. As the intellectual outfit of scholars multiplies, fairness in the use of it should increase proportionately, must increase proportionately, or the investigating power "loses stroke" upon one side, and we have an eagle with a wing crippled seeking to cut a straight course to the stars, or expecting the observer to think he does. "Were there a single man," says Bacon, "to be found with firmness sufficient to efface from his mind the theories and notions vulgarly received, and to apply his intellect free and without prevention, the best hopes might be entertained of his success."

What is it, then, to be great, but to be fair? He who would approach a subject like this of which we write, in the sacred name of science, needs to be manned for the results, be they what they may. This matter is too large for any littleness of spirit to grasp. No prepossessions are going to get at it. It is not time yet for any "working hypothesis." It is

too early to have assurances that one thing can, or another cannot be. We shall never have the truth by inventing it, but by discovering it. We must be equal to the surprises of truth. If she beat the breath out of our dearest delusions, we must be willing to bury them. If she strike the keystone out of our firmest convictions, we must be able to climb their ruins. I say, without hesitation, that no investigator is qualified to pass judgment upon psychical phenomena, who is not equally ready to admit, if admit he must, in the end, that he is dealing with the physiological action of cells in the frontal lobes of the brain, or with the presence of a human soul disembodied by death. He must be hospitable to a hallucination, or to a spectre. He must be, if necessary, just to an apparition as well as generous to a molecule. He must use the eyes of his soul as well as the lens of his microscope. He must not be frightened away from the discovery of some superb unknown law, because there is a vulgar din of "Ghosts!" about his ears. He had better find a ghost, if ghost there be, than to find nothing at all, for fear it may not be "sci-

entific " to walk about after one is dead. That does not deserve the name of the scientific attitude which assumes that the supernatural is impossible, any more than that which assumes that it is necessary. No foregone conclusion which restricts the nature of an undiscovered law to a purely physical basis is more scholarly than the bias which prejudicates a superhuman agency behind the dancing of a piano in the air. It may be just as unscientific to assert prematurely that a man of honor, intelligence, and education is suffering from a mere local affection of the retina, when he testifies that he sees and converses with the image of his distant brother at the moment of that brother's death by accident, as it would be to assert that Aristotle expresses himself to the American public through the columns of the " Banner of Light." It may be no more judicial to predetermine that the appearance of phosphorescent letters in the air, under given conditions, must of necessity be a piece of jugglery, than it would be to fall upon our knees before it as the work of angels, or cross ourselves before it as the threat of demons. He may be no more fitted

for psychical research who dismisses a certified instance of the clairaudient inter-consciousness of friends a thousand miles apart, as a foredoomed coincidence or exaggeration, than he who would accept the "communication" of his recently dead son, sent to him unsought by the medium who has dared to subject the sacred privacy of a stranger's bereavement to the paragraph of the Spiritualistic press, happily unaware that the supposed spirit has forgotten, in the educational elevation of the disembodied life, how to spell his own name. The philosophical faculty may be no more exhibited by the student who takes it for granted that the raps in a circle of investigators are made by knuckles or toe-joints, than it is exhibited by the man who guides his investments on the advice of a female medium who does not know the difference between a United States registered bond and Mr. Micawber's note-of-hand. To assume that a historical case of house possession like that of Wesley, or his more modern fellow-sufferers, is an ingenious trick or a highly-developed rat, is perhaps, if we think of it, not much more intelligent than to manage one's matrimonial

affairs in accordance with the direction of a gentleman who examines locks of hair, and charges a dollar for his opinion.

The question: What is evidence? is a long one to answer; but the question: What is prejudice? is short enough. The stiff materialist is not educated for a sound investigator any more than the limp emotionalist; and the impulse to decry, as a matter of course, the mental or psychical basis of obscure phenomena is scarcely more reasonable than the hysteria which hangs upon Indian babble as the utterance of the intelligent dead.

We have said that it is too early to accept a working hypothesis. Suppose that the telepathic theory might explain an immense proportion (I do not say all) of what are called the supernatural facts of Spiritualism; whether it does so, we have not yet "accumulated and reflected" enough to say. Both the objections to and the arguments for the adaptation of telepathy to these phenomena are keenly interesting; but they would require the leisure of a monograph to discuss them intelligently.

There is here, we say, an excellent conjec-

ture, so far as it goes. No student of the subject can deny that. But no student of the subject ought to assume, at this stage of the investigation, that telepathy goes far enough. Wait. Let us not repeat the blunder of superstition or of incredulity. Wait. Let us have something that will go to the end of the matter. Sir Isaac Newton humbly said that he had one talent: the ability to look steadily at a problem until he saw it through. The only hope that we have in dealing with this problem of problems lies in the will and the power to look at it until we see it through. The world has played with the thing long enough. Otherwise sensible human beings have been the dupes or the cynics of the subject from age to age, and from civilization to civilization. It is time that the mystery which has baffled twenty centuries found its master. Other secrets of force have defied and been conquered. Why not this? Other laws have eluded and been grasped. Why not this? Other dangers have been dared, other obstacles pulverized, other ridicule or indifference waived, other patience and passion spent for other conflicts with the reluctance of na-

ture to surrender truth. Why not these, and for this? Here is one fact: the existence from all time of a huge sum of inexplicable phenomena. Here is another: the intelligent human will. At this epoch of our development there ought, if ever, to be an equation between the two. The Indian occultist, the Jewish sorcerer, the Scotch seer, the Puritan witch, the modern medium, have presented but so many passing forms of the permanent fact, which, like Ahasuerus, has wandered from generation to generation, a homeless, deathless, unwelcome thing. Like the Spanish knight in the song, it

> "Rides from land to land,
> It sails from sea to sea."

If the time has come to break lances with it, let us do so in downright earnest.

That was a timely anecdote recalled by one of the distinguished investigators in London, and attributed to Sir William Hamilton and Airey. It was Airey who, Sir William having alluded to some important mathematical fact, answered: "No, it cannot be." The great philosopher gently observed: "I have been investigating it closely for the last five months,

and cannot doubt its truth." "But," said Airey, "I 've been at it for the last five minutes, and cannot see it at all!"

The psychical opportunity, as it may be called, takes its due chronological order after the great physical opportunity of which modern science has already availed itself, and may be looked upon as a natural sequence — as a case of evolutionary growth in investigation. After the more demonstrable comes the more elusive; after the more manifest, the more occult. We are now to prepare for what an American philosopher calls "the growing predominance of the psychical life."

View it through whatever glass we may, there is a chance here for a great discovery and for a great discoverer. The day has gone when the stock arguments of incredulity are strong enough to grip the subject. To assume that a large mass of our respectable fellow-citizens are either fools or knaves no longer quite covers the case. The jugglery hypothesis, too often a sound and necessary one, is not elastic enough to stretch over the circuit; as in a case of house-possession personally known to the writer of this paper,

which was carried to the leading prestidigitator of the day for his professional opinion, with the inquiry: Is there anything in your business which would explain these occurrences?" "No!" was the ringing answer, with a terrible thump of the conjurer's hand upon the table. "No! And by —— I would not stay in such a house twenty-four hours!"

Science has her superstitions as well as faith; it is the first of these to be superstitiously afraid of superstition. Only with the developed courage which is implied in perfect skill are the tactics of truth to be mastered. We may say that Science at the bayonet's point, before the fortress of Mystery, is put upon her mettle at last. Too unscholarly has been the sneer or the silence; too feeble the attack; too serious have been the defeats. The moment of the charge has come. Most great martial crises create great generals. If ever there was a chance for one in the history of human knowledge, there is a chance for one to-day, and here.

Shall the power which could classify the kingdoms of the earth and claim the glory of them be thwarted by the capacity of an un-

touched dining-table to thump a man against a wall? Is a "brain-wave" more unmanageable than an ether-wave? We are taught that there are octaves in the wave-lengths of light corresponding to octaves in sound-vibrations, and that the spectrum has been studied for about four octaves beyond the red end, and one beyond the violet. Is this a less mysterious accomplishment than the power of the human will to act as a substitute for anæsthesia in a surgical operation? Is the boldest conjecture of telepathy more stupendous than the telephone was twelve years ago? We smile when we are told of the telegraphic battery constructed for the accommodation of what are called spirits who desire to employ the Morse alphabet. There are probably few readers of this volume who would go beyond a smile in regard to such an invention. Yet, is the unknown action of mind on mind possibly expressed through such a use of the laws of electricity more amazing than the phonograph from which we are to hear the treasured voices of the dead or absent?

Whether we are dealing with matter, mind, or spirit, it is too early yet in the process of

investigation to know. It is not too early to know that one law may be no more illegal than another law, and that because we understand the conditions of one, and do not understand the conditions of the other, is no more of a reason why the other should not exist, than Franklin's ignorance of the value of shares in the Electric Light Company of New York city, to-day, was a reason for not putting up the first lightning-rods. It is not too early to know that the psychical opportunity is a great chance for honesty and liberality of spirit, for originality and force of mind, for attention, for patience, for reason, and, we may say, for hope. What benefactors to their kind will they be who shall clutch from this mystery, ancient as earth, shadowy as dreams, and sombre as fate, the substance of a verified law!

Be it the law which guides the telegraph, the law which sways an audience, the law by which a hand-pass cures a headache, the law which unites the thoughts of distant friends, or the law by which dumb death should create a vocabulary for deaf life, the chance to formulate it is the chance for a great achievement. Accomplished or defeated, it is an

achievement for scholarship and for common-sense to undertake with a sober, dedicated spirit, adequate to the seriousness of the consequences involved in success or failure. We may add, what is sure to be understood by some of our readers, and as sure not to be by others, that it is an achievement asking also for the higher education of that candid and noble power imperfectly called spirituality of nature. He who has enough of this faculty to respect it will follow our meaning. We need not tax the patience of him who has not, by here emphasizing the relation of such a power to the scientific method.

In physical theory, the gap between the development of the lower and higher organizations has never been filled. In religious belief, there remains an insoluble mystery about the doctrine that claims to mediate between God and man. In psychical speculation, too, shall we expect a missing link? Will the conjunctive between life and death elude us? — the combining medium of soul and body defy us? When we have a psychical system lacking no more than science and theology lack, we may pause, and we should not pause till then. One need not be a Spencerian in philosophy, to cry

with Spencer: "The deepest truth we can get at must be unaccountable."

The Darwin of the science of the soul is yet to be. He has a large occasion. It will be found greater to explain the dissolution than the evolution of the race. It is more to teach us where we go to than to tell us what we came from. From the "Descent" to the "Destiny" of man is the natural step. The German physicist who gave his book the supreme title of "The Discovery of the Soul" was wiser than he knew. That was a piercing satire on the materialistic philosophy which suggested, not long since, that mourners hereafter be given front seats at geological lectures, and the most deeply bereaved provided with chip-hammers to collect specimens. Older than the classic of St. Pierre, and young as the anguish of yesterday, is the moan: "Since death is a good, and since Virginia is happy, I would die, too, and be united to Virginia."

Science has given us a past. Too long has she left it to faith to give us a future. Human love cannot be counted out of the forces of nature; and earth-bound human knowledge turns to lift its lowered eyes toward the firmament of immortal life.

VII.

THE PSYCHICAL WAVE.

TRUTH is terrible. She will have her way. One law is as inexorable as another law, and the mind that fails, from infatuation with one, to keep in relation to another, is brought up short, somewhere, by the very constitution of things.

One thinks of this not for the first time nor for the last one, but explicitly, in watching the course of the current of progress with which it is our fortune to be contemporaneous. No alert observation would deny that investigation of psychical phenomena has gone above the level of a craze or a fashion. It has reached the dignity of an intellectual current. All momentum has its equivalent force. What is the philosophy working beneath the psychical wave?

When Herbert Spencer wrote the famous pages which he entitled "The Rhythm of

Motion," he gave to the busy world which has no time to be scholarly, but which is eager to follow the trail of scholarship too great not to be comprehensible, a phrase for which we are all deep debtors. This term expresses better than any of which we have the use, the nature of one of the most powerful laws known to the universe — the law of vibration. Every created thing oscillates; this is the amount of it. Though we wrought ourselves blind to ask the reason, we have not to go beyond the timing of our own pulses to learn the fact. The petty beat of the pendulum in the kitchen clock sways within the majestic diurnal revolution of the globe. The wave ebbs upon the shore; the tide flows beneath the moon. Your telephone message is a shallop set adrift upon the ripples of sound. Poetry uses no metaphor when it speaks of the floods of light. If a child draw the tip of a pencil lightly across a paper the line will be undulatory. If a cannon-ball were uninterrupted by any impeding body, it would return to the spot whence it started. A baby's cry rises and drops from insistence to subsidence. An American storm, spanning the continent from

Montana to Maine, begins as a "blizzard" and ends as a zephyr. A weed growing at the bottom of a brook undulates. The use of the telescope teaches that every pulsation of the heart jars the room. Both lateral and vertical oscillations beset the motion of a railway train. The songs that muse of "winding rivers" sing above the law of conflict between the current and the channel. A leaf trembles in the wind, and the climate of the earth is affected by changes of position "taking twenty-one thousand years to complete." Sleep visits the blessed once in twenty-four hours, and awful periodicities control the jaws of earthquakes which swallow cities. An intermittent fever and a variable star obey the same authority. Sunrise and sunset, season and season, life and decay, are the throbs of one mighty circulation poured from an unseen Heart.

These things we are taught as the alphabet of modern philosophy. We are told that the law leans over, far beyond the scope of physics; that the human mind, like the ultimate atom, serves the large decree; and that human experience itself is a slave to the eter-

nal rhythm. We are reminded that grief and joy and hope and anguish alternate as much as the budding and the fading of a wind-flower. We are asked to observe that misery has its paroxysms as well as neuralgia; and that mourners smile because they have wept, and weep again, since they did smile. We are reminded that crime and pestilence pulsate in epidemics across the globe. We are called upon to record the throbs of the pendulum of history, whose swing sweeps from civilization to ruin, from the people to the throne, from tyranny to riot, from confusion to order, from morality to madness, from atheism to bigotry, from despair to faith.

We are asked, in short, to see for ourselves, by a review of that close collation of facts which the philosophy as well as the science of our day delights to honor, that vibration is the condition of motion, and that motion is the condition of life.

But we are asked to remember yet another thing. The figure of the cone of history is almost as old as historical philosophy; but the youngest of our thinkers would fall back upon it, who told us to-day that spiral law holds

over or holds into rhythmic law. A thing or a thought works to and fro, but that is not all; it works spirally to and fro. For growth or for decline, to the base or to the apex — in the phrase of modern thought, to evolution or to dissolution — it is in the nature of motion to tend. Rhythm is not a simple affair. It is a complication. There is rhythm within rhythm, motion over against motion; movement double, quadruple, complex — if we do not say infinite, it is because we are too finite to follow the coil.

The vibration of the violin string seems a simple affair of molar disturbance producing sound-waves. Who shall say what was the rhythm started in the soul of the peasant who heard Ole Bull play in a tavern, and, amid the hush of his fellows — moved beyond them all — brought his hand down thunderously upon a table and cried: "*This is a lie!*"

Materialism is not the best word in the world to define an aspect of modern thought, for which, on the whole, for our purposes, there may be no better. It stands, at least in the minds of most of us, for something definite, in the press of many indefinite views

as to the nature or the outcome of a conflict which is sweeping us all along, soldier and civilian, whither we would, or whither we would not. The thing which is represented in a measure by this word has carried a high hand, and had a merry day of it. The age has succumbed to what it has called its tendency as thoroughly as a hearty boy to the measles. We have had it hard. It has been thought a feature of force of character not to believe too much. *Dilettante* doubt has made *bric-à-brac* of the gate called Beautiful that guarded the temple. All the iconoclasts of wit and wisdom have hacked at the shrine. To be learned, it has been understood, was not to be devout. In proportion to one's knowledge one failed to believe. It has been the great effort of the time to establish a mathematical equation between an instructed mind and an abandoned faith. The mere holding of certain views has been accepted by a powerful class of thinkers as the tattoo-mark of intellectual barbarism. Did you not know that an immortal soul was old-fashioned? Have you not understood that God is out of date? Then go to. Teach your Sunday-school. Join

a female prayer-meeting. Write religious verses. Leave knowledge to science and truth to men.

This has been the spirit of the times, and it must be admitted that it has been a successful spirit. Precious thing after precious thing has crumbled before it. Pearls have been dimmed. Hopes have been hurled from great heights to heavy depths. Daylight has darkened. It has gone hard with us to keep the faith-cells in our brains. Dear beliefs of souls dearer and better than our own have slipped out of our yearning arms as the dead slip into the coffin. Many an honest and earnest man in the last decade or two has lost out of his faith what he would give his life to regain, and call himself happy at the price. Silent hours wrung from busy lives will answer; secrets of reticent hearts will lift up mute faces to the question: Went the day sore with ye?

We have looked on while disrespect for the unseen, in the name of science, has torn at the vitals of everything which makes life worth living, or death a great opportunity. We have endured while murder in the name of

surgery has been done upon the fair body of truth. We have suffered while the sweet reasonableness of human hope has writhed under the scalpel of its vivisectors. There has been no anæsthetic for that anguish. Ask. Any man will tell you who has known it.

They had their day, and they used it. We learned that we were not men, but protoplasm. We learned that we were not spirits, but chemical combinations. We learned that we had laid up treasure in the wrong places. We learned that the Drama of Hamlet and the Ode to Immortality were secretions of the gray matter of the brain. We learned that guilt was nothing but the law of heredity. We learned that one's prehistoric *amœba* (if anybody) should be blamed for one's private vices. We learned that beyond the fugitive slaves which we call the joys of this life, and the disproportionate pains which are their masters, we had not an expectation. Going hounded down to death, and crying out for the emancipation of eternal happiness, we learned that we had not a hope to our names.

We learned — no, no, thank God, we never learned to lay the beloved of our lives at the

bottom of a grave and leave them there. We have never come without a pause to the end of the Apostate's Creed : —

"I believe in the Chaotic Nebula, self-existent Evolver of heaven and earth . . . in the disunion of saints . . . the dispersion of the body, and in Death Everlasting. Amen."

The modern philosophy has at one point prepared itself to fall a victim to its own logic. It has given registered bonds to the law of rhythm. It has omitted to remember that the history of all human belief is the history of oscillation, and that it must itself take its turn and meet its fate, like other human pulsations. The creed of negation, the *cultus* of death, has risen to its crest, and toppled. There came to our ears a wail of despair for the race at which the stoutest trembled. Was it the roar of the ocean of all time? Nay; look abroad ; it was but the rustle of a brain-wave on the shore. The time is at hand. The moment of the ebb has come. This is the law. They who took away from us the only hopes that made existence anything else than a stupendous tyranny perpetrated upon a defrauded race, shall see their dark work come

surging back from the cap to the trough. This is the law. Long have they taught us the rights of such autocracy. Well have they worshiped the Law of Nature. In the way of social position, they would take nothing less for it than the Throne of God. By the creeds of their own deeds they shall be judged, or there is no conclusion in logic and no unity in history. In an old French picture demons toss a lost soul from one to the other, like a ball. Truth, which fares hard in an untruthful world, meets here a fate as restless. This is the law.

In the parlance of philosophy, we are told that the force embodied as momentum in a given direction cannot be destroyed; and that, even if it disappear, or seem to disappear, it reappears in the form of reaction on the retarding body. The easy illustration of the tuning-fork is used to remind us that "as much force as the finger exerts in pulling the prong aside, so much opposing force is brought into play among the cohering particles. Hence, when the prong is liberated, it is urged back by a force equal to that used indeflecting it."

The materialistic sound-wave has turned. This, he that slumbereth can hear. It will be nothing new in human story if we are called upon to observe that the ebb is at least as great as the flow. The exerting force, we must remember, not only meets its opposing force, it creates its opposing force. This is the law.

It has been written of the father of Goethe that he had no spiritual elements in him by which his weak points could be transformed into strong ones. What is true of a given type of character is true of a corresponding type of belief. In the whole Agnostic direction of motion there lacked the spiritual element by which its weak points could be converted into strong ones, thus to stand out against the crisis of the ebb and be carried over into the next vibration in a form likely to perpetuate the vitality of the last.

I think one may venture the assertion that the ruling philosophy of our day has done nothing more important than the arousing of a tremendous resistance to itself. This resistance promises to be, at the least, as powerful as the force which it resists. The inex-

orable rhythm has begun in the motion of thought. A theory should be a gun. It should never shoot without calculating on the recoil. The materialist did not calculate upon the recoil; and the recoil has come. In the hunter's phrase, his weapon has kicked.

It has been said of Lessing that he knew but one system of tactics, which was with fixed bayonet to run his rival through the body. "He made no prisoners. When the work was over there was nothing left of his antagonist." The skepticism of our day has made too many prisoners; and her prisoners are escaping beneath her eyes.

The interesting thing, however, about the whole matter is the point of the compass at which the dungeon walls have been broken. Or, to keep to our figure, it is the direction of motion in which the rhythm has swung. One who has thought up to a certain point on these questions will not hesitate to say that the psychical wave upon which we have been caught is the outcome — direct, logical, and legal — of the physical wave in which we have been buried. This is the law. It has taken an extraordinary form. This is the curiosity.

We have been taught that rhythm is a complication ; that there is rhythm within rhythm, motion lateral and vertical, movement on an axis, and movement in an orbit and movement in a spiral ; in short, that oscillation is not a simple affair of two strokes. The vibration may start where it is not expected. The pulsation may hit athwart where logic was not great enough to look for it. This is precisely what has happened.

If any of the priests and prophets of the materialistic philosophy had been told fifteen years ago, while they sat precipitating our souls into a sub-acetate in their laboratories, or offering us little icicles from the Glacial Period to replace the Easter lilies on the new-made grave, that more than one of the foremost scientists of Great Britain would be to-day avowed believers in the psychical nature of obscure phenomena, such as it has hitherto been considered good intellectual form to turn over to the juggler and the medium — but imagination cannot struggle beyond the learned smile with which such a suggestion would have been bowed out. On the certificate of the scientific world, mad Cassandra

would have been incarcerated in an institution offering all the modern improvements in alienism, had she foretold a vibration of thought like that of which this fact is the sonometer.

The burliest positivist is not more puzzled at the present growth among us of the psychical life than the religious believer. As little as it was to be conceded that men who had been instructed in the physiological basis of life could ever interest themselves in the conveyance of an impression from one mind to another mind without the intervention of physical media; so little was it to be dreamed that the rescue of faith should be attempted through a table-tipper, or a trance-subject, or an Oriental mystic. Priest and physicist are at one in their perplexity. He who sat down to rest from his labors in the belief that he had slain the chimera of the human soul with his chip-hammer, and he who has been devoutly praying Heaven to arrest the chip-hammer by a miraculous revival of religion, are alike conscious of surprise. It is not within the organism of the church, it is not within the social ranks of faith, that the pen-

dulum has begun to swing. If, because of praying for it, Heaven knows — that is a question for supernatural science to answer — yet not in the direction of praying for it has the pulsation started. Outside of all organism, rank, faith, and direction, the resisting force has sprung. If we were using the military figure, we should say it is a flank movement. From the oscillatory point of view, it is a counter-current. So unique is it, so apparently hostile to undulatory law, while yet so subtly obedient to it, that we might call it a tide-rip.

At any rate, here we are. Carried along upon a roller of reaction from the explicit, the world is well-nigh going over a cataract after the mysterious. Silken society seeks what it is pleased to call the esoteric, as it would seek a new waltz or an original dinner-card. We hear of a Chela served up for lunches, as if he were the last new poet, or a humming-bird on the half-walnut shell. A live Theosophist is a Godsend in a dead drawing-room. A brother from the resources of Indian occultism carries us in chains. We urge him to throw a rope into the sky, climb up and take it with him; it is a disappoint-

ment if the Axminster carpet does not serve as hopeful a basis for this purpose as his native jungle.

What is dubbed the Mind-cure runs riot even among people who really have minds to be cured. One is waylaid upon corners by one's educated friends, and besought to take one's personal share of the universal disorder to a woman who sits with the back of her chair against the back of yours, and tells you that there is (like the distinguished Mrs. Harris) "no such a person" as your pet bronchitis, or the sick-headache inherited from your grandfather. It is not to the purpose of this paper to assert or to deny the cures reported to be wrought by this form of mysticism, but only to enumerate the form in its place among the others as significant of the present state of things. In some parts of our country it has had a significance truly enormous and almost incredible.

Telepathy, the new word for the old thing, gives us plenty of occupation. We seek to establish the telephonic connections of the unaided human mind, as eagerly as Professor Bell fights for his right and his patents. Sep-

arated friends make appointments to meet in dreams, or to "break-house" from the body, and take twilight journeys together in the liberated spirit. Our sympathetic coincidences are brought out and trotted down the psychical race-course. Our family ghosts are beckoned from their attics and fêted handsomely for the first time in their lives. If we are the happy possessors of a genuine life-apparition, we try the theories of brain-waves upon it, as a costumer drapes a dummy; and, if the garment fits, so much the better for the dummy.

The spiritualistic *séance* has risen from the bottom to the top. It floats upon the smooth surface of society easily. Mediums have their fashions, like bonnets. They are put on or off as the season or the mode decrees. Personal beauty or a gentle manner goes well to their capital. In parlors to which they are unaccustomed they materialize flowers and play upon invisible violins. Circles strange to the occupation tip tables with the gas down, and shudder when the medium shrieks, or the finger-touches of the invisible stroke the paling cheek.

Beneath these popular amusements thousands of men and women are paying their two dollars a "communication" for messages from their dead, and carrying spirit-photographs happily identified by the mourners in lockets on their hearts.

On the other hand, quietly, and above them all, the students of the subject sit hard at work, tabulating authentic marvels, elaborating diagrams of digit-tests, and inventing combined die-throwers and tally-keepers to prove or to disprove the existence of the transference of thought without physical agency; investigating hypnotism, mesmerism, the witch-hazel, apparitions, trances, and the rest of it, in their own fashion and with their own admirable thoroughness; but divided among themselves in what we may call the prejudice of the result, as much as the Church itself is split asunder on the vital differences of religious creed. Thus and here we are. I would not be understood as flinging the toss of a phrase against any of these forms of the prevailing interest in psychical facts; as though one could say of any one of them, the maddest or the silliest, that there is nothing in it.

There is something in them all. Let it become the task rather than the whim of the times to find out what.

Now as we have already noticed, no one forgets that this sort of thing has happened, in varying degrees, before. Mystery is as old as life. The medium of New York and the Witch of Endor are of one family. Magic and marvel are as ancient as the fire which came down from heaven and "respected" the burnt-offering of Abel. Cotton Mather took a bewitched girl home to exorcise her, and Mesmer did not hesitate to claim that for twenty years he had magnetized the sun. Superstition has swollen fact and curiosity has gone mad over the phenomenal, many a day and oft. The world has never been able to get away from the inexplicable and the unseen. The point of chief interest now is that the scientific method meant she should. Its apostles were to have changed all that. Nothing was more to be expected. It was a part of the new Gospel. In depriving us of hope they were to rid us of superstition, and the result was counted worth the cost.

Let it, on the contrary, be noted that the

opposite has definitely happened. One would wish to give the emphasis of under-statement to a point like this, in saying that it has been reserved for the scientific age to experience such an uprising of forces not yet amenable to science, hitherto scorned by science, and wholly at odds with what has been the spirit of science up to this time, as must constitute in itself a phenomenon when witnessed in a period of such intelligence and incredulity.

From the last spot where danger was dreamed of the recoil has started. From the very reservoirs of superstition the flood has come. Not of the might of men, not of reason, nor of faith, the current has swung into the channel. From the illegal, the unclassified, from the despised and rejected — as before in the great awakenings of life — the power pours. A Greater than the method of the age is in it. Bound in the flesh of a philosophy without a hope and without a spirit, we see that there has come upon us a deep movement of invisible forces toward invisible truths. This is the motion of rhythm. This is the resistance of reaction. This is the law.

One of the popular romances of the day

deftly recognizes these facts in the tale of a city beleaguered by the dead, who drive the living beyond the walls and close the gates upon them, because they have not perceived "the true significance of life."

Louis Quatorze went one day to chapel and listened to the court clergyman, who, in a moment of forgetfulness, ventured to make the rash assertion, —

"We must all die."

The king made an impatient movement.

"Yes, sire," hastily interpolated the poor preacher, "*almost all!*"

The chief trouble with the materialistic philosophy seems to have been that we must almost all die. Death is a fact which has not been created for the main purpose of confirming this philosophy in those more persuasive features by which truth appeals to the human reason. The theory which shuts us into our coffins, screws the lid down, and says, "Now get out if you can!" lacks certain elements of the permanently pleasing or convincing to which mankind are still sensitive.

Death is either a glorious chance or it is an awful outrage. To every hope that leans or

leaps beyond it, they shall be bound over who wrenched that hope away from us. Every man who has laid his dearest dead away in the dust and ashes of the spirit of the age, every heart that has known the isolation of a lost belief in the unseen, every uncomforted and comfortless lifting of life out of which faith has departed, every untold pang, every ghastly terror, every bitter tear, all frost-bitten tenderness and reverence and human lowliness of heart, and happy looking for blessed, better things to be — these, all these, to the uttermost, shall go to swell the great receding wave. Force is not lost. The molecular disturbance of despair, when it comes to the ebb, shall go over to form the rising tide of hope.

By this way or by that, from superstition, or from science, or from faith, or from philosophy, with the impartiality of all profound human movements, the oscillation will take care of itself; but it will come.

We have not all of us the auditory nerve of the great musician who, at the age of four, insisted that he heard the blue-bells ring; but an ear less fine can hear strange harmonies in the restless air to-day.

Seek it as they will — if by sage or seer, though in folly or in wisdom — it is not to be denied that men are concentrating their curiosity, their enthusiasm, and their research upon the preservation of the human soul.

It is impossible to avoid the question: Is this, too, another wave to burst in bubbles on the long shore? But it is reasonable to ask if it may not be the swirl of the whirlpool whose spiral motion (such is the law) fathoms the depths of truth, and, by the protective power of the spiritual element, carries the diver who dares within reach of the buried treasure.